

Nepotistic
Stalinism
in Romania

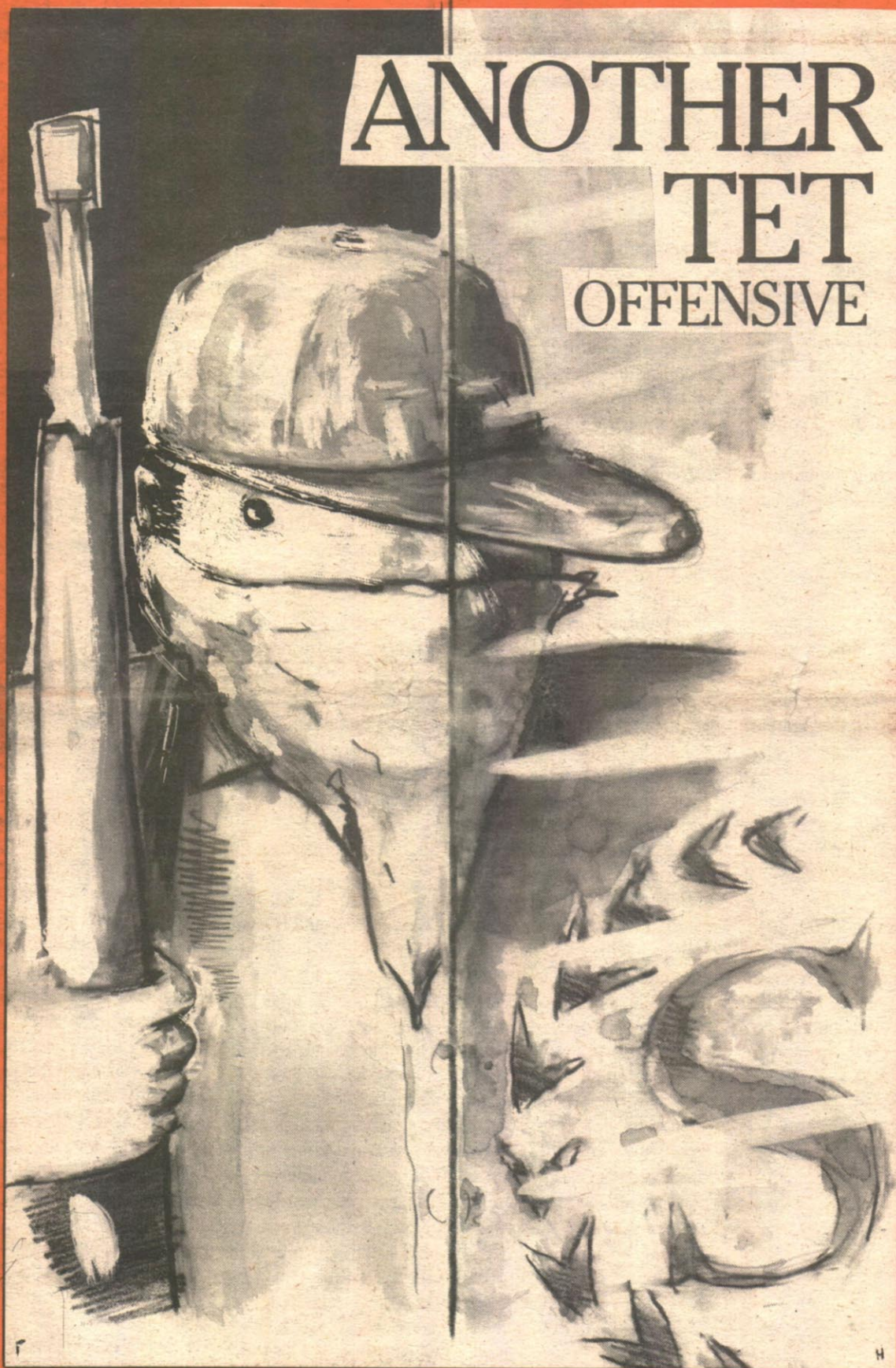
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IN THESE TIMES

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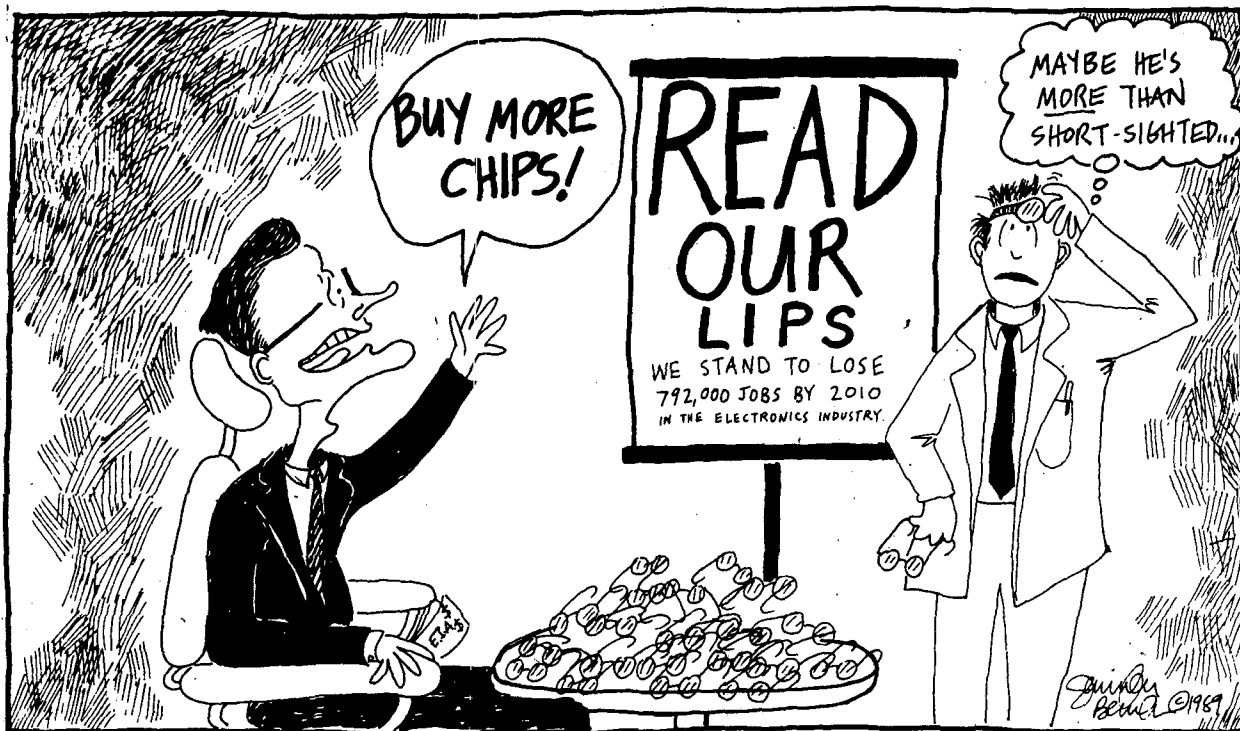
DEC. 6-12, 1989

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Does the recent push by Salvadoran rebels
signal a turning point in the war?
Chris Norton reports, page 9

Bush unplugging high-technology



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

As president, Ronald Reagan talked a strong laissez-faire game, but in his second term he sanctioned governmental intervention to prop up America's ailing high-technology industries. George Bush, a reputed moderate, talks the laissez-faire language and appears determined to make good on his words by gutting the Reagan-era high-tech initiatives.

According to congressional sources, Bush wants to eliminate or reduce the funds spent by the Defense Department's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on industrial research and development. Bush wants to cut funding for SEMATECH, the government-backed consortium of semiconductor producers that is developing advanced methods for manufacturing computer chips. The Reagan administration contributed \$100 million annually to SEMATECH.

Bush also wants to eliminate \$30 million that Congress allocated for DARPA's research and development on high-definition television (HDTV). At a press conference held by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a liberal think tank, former government consultant Robert Cohen charged that the Defense Department is negotiating with Japanese firms to provide advanced imaging systems.

The administration also wants to ax funds for research into X-ray lithography, an essential technology for producing semiconductor chips, and wants to eliminate the Pen-

tagon's Manufacturing Technology program.

The administration has even balked at releasing reports promised to Congress. A Commerce Department report on HDTV promised for last summer has never appeared. An administration five-year plan for encouraging American research in superconductivity scheduled for release November 1 has yet to appear. And the White House delayed for three weeks the release of a report by a congressionally mandated National Advisory Committee on Semiconductors. Even today, citizens who want copies of the report have to obtain them from a private consulting firm in Roslyn, Va.

Mosbacher's retreat: These steps climax a yearlong power struggle within the administration between proponents of laissez-faire economics and Commerce Department supporters of government intervention. At his January confirmation hearings for secretary of commerce, Robert Mosbacher pledged administration support for HDTV research. In his statements that winter and spring, Mosbacher indicated administration support for industrial policy. Speaking at the Economic Club of Detroit, for instance, Mosbacher called for an "industry-led business-government partnership."

But last summer, at a White House meeting, Richard Darman, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Michael Boskin, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), rebuked Mosbacher for supporting industrial policy. Mosbacher and his top aides began to backtrack. In an interview in August, one Commerce Department official denied that Mosbacher had ever favored an industrial policy. "We've never called for picking winners and losers," the official said.

Then in September, Mosbacher announced he was dropping plans to aid HDTV. "What we've learned in the last six months is that there are a lot of other technologies that are equally important," Mosbacher spokesman Wayne Berman said at a press conference. But as subsequent administration actions revealed, Mosbacher was retreating not simply from funding HDTV research but from any direct government role in encouraging high technology.

Mosbacher and the administration's retreat was a victory not only for free-market ideologues but also for the Japanese HDTV industry, which had labored behind the scenes to block American initiatives. The Japanese-funded Electronics Industry Association had produced a report and testified before Congress against government funding for an American HDTV industry. American electronics firms like Ampex, which distributes Japanese-made products, bought full-page ads against the HDTV program.

Administration HDTV opponents also have significant links to Japanese industry and government, which may have reinforced their advocacy of a laissez-faire approach. As an economist the CEA's Boskin belonged to a research organization set up by Japan's Ministry of Finance. The CEA's top Japan specialist, Gary Saxonhouse, continues to advise the Research Institute of Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

Two million jobs: The administration's abandonment of high-tech initiatives has prompted protests from Congress and industry. On October 9, 31 members of Congress and more than 100 prominent business and labor leaders sent an open letter to Bush protesting the cuts in HDTV and other DARPA programs. At a November 20 news conference, Sen. John Heinz (R-PA) and Reps. Richard Gephardt (D-MO), Norman Mineta (D-CA) and Mel Levine (D-CA) sent Bush a letter warning that "eliminating America's few strategic technology initiatives will cause permanent damage to both our defense and commercial industrial bases."

But perhaps more telling are two reports released last month. In the 1988 Omnibus Trade Bill, Congress created a blue-ribbon National Advisory Committee on Semiconductors chaired by Ian M. Ross, the president of AT&T Bell Laboratories. It included the chief executive officers of National Semiconductor Corporation, Martin Marietta and Texas Instruments, and high officials from the Commerce, Energy and Defense departments.

In its report, sent to the president November 1 but released to the public on November 20 as Congress was recessing, the committee warned that "if the U.S. position in semiconductor devices, equipments and materials continues to deteriorate, the entire domestic electronics products industry will be at the mercy of foreign suppliers. The loss of control of this large segment of the economy puts millions of jobs and billions of dollars in tax revenue in jeopardy."

To aid the semiconductor industry, the committee recommended the kind of industrial policy that Mosbacher had earlier advocated. It called for government aid to set up a Consumer Electronics Capital Corporation that would fund new research and manufacturing efforts, government loans and tax relief to "encourage and purposefully sup-

INSIDE STORY

port market re-entry for the U.S. consumer electronics industry," and increased DARPA funding for SEMATECH and other high-tech ventures.

On November 20, the EPI released a study on telecommunications policy and HDTV that reinforced the committee's contentions. In this study, authors Robert Cohen and Kenneth Donow estimated the cost of letting Japan and Western Europe dominate HDTV production. The cost, Cohen and Donow argue, cannot be limited to television production alone but will extend to the industries that will make the parts for HDTV and that will use HDTV screens. These parts include semiconductors, automated manufacturing equipment and computers.

With a weak HDTV industry that accounted for only 10 percent of domestic sales, Cohen and Donow estimated that by the year 2010 the U.S. could lose 792,000 jobs in the electronics industry, and over two million jobs across the economy. By 2010, the loss of HDTV would contribute \$227 billion annually to the U.S. trade deficit, while a strong HDTV industry that accounted for 50 percent of domestic sales would contribute \$10 billion to a U.S. trade surplus.

These figures, based on initial American Electronics Association estimates, are highly speculative, but if past estimates of American industrial decline are any indication, Cohen and Donow's estimates will turn out to be overly optimistic rather than pessimistic.

The Bush administration, however, is unaffected by these arguments. A Washington consultant, who asked not to be identified, attended a White House forum where CEA head Boskin gave his philosophy. "Everything was about interest rates and budget deficits," the consultant recalled. "He never once mentioned an industry. I asked him what would happen if the U.S. loses its position in key technologies. He said, 'Well, you have a point there. But if I was going to support an industry, I wouldn't support HDTV because we are already so far behind.' He displayed incredible ignorance."

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By Diana Johnstone

A BASIC ASYMMETRY OF THE GORBACHOV-Bush meeting off Malta lies in the attitude toward empire. George Bush is an apparatchik of the U.S. imperial command, ready to dispatch Rambo to secure such outposts of American civilization as the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador. Mikhail Gorbachov, in contrast, has been sending the Soviet Union's Eastern European satellites their separate ways with good-natured blessings.

Imagine American policy being made by intellectuals who opposed the Vietnam War from the start. A wild dream.

But a rough equivalent of this impossible fantasy has happened in the Soviet Union. *Perestroika* is the product of liberal intellectuals who opposed the invasion of Afghanistan from the start and whose warnings were vindicated when Soviet forces got bogged down there.

The Soviet retreat from empire has been breathtakingly rapid. In Eastern Europe, only Romania, long praised in the West for its independence from Moscow, remains frozen in its nepotistic police state (see story on page 11).

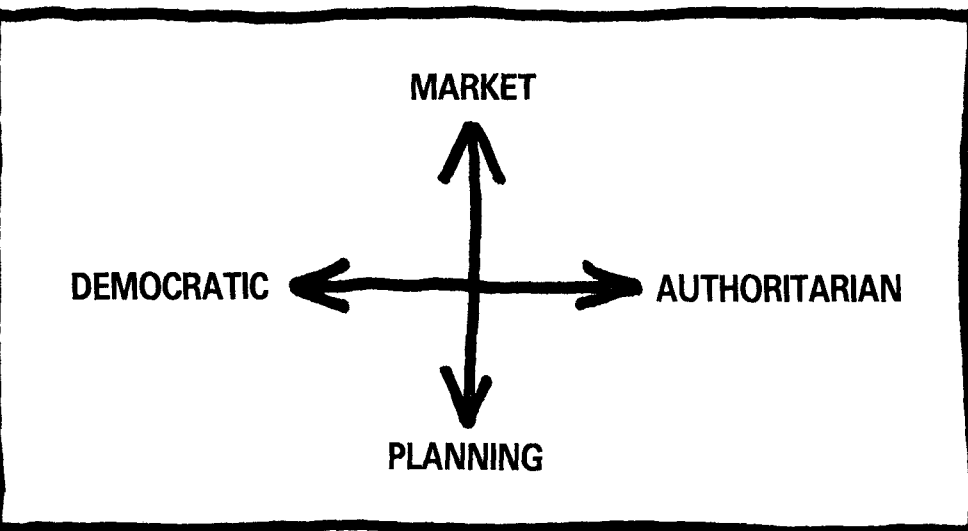
Czechoslovakia, where hope lived and died in 1968, provided the fitting climax for the Gorbachovian liberation of the Soviet empire's buffer zone in Eastern Central Europe. Less dramatic than the opening of the Berlin Wall, scenes of happy crowds dancing while gentle snowflakes fell on Wenceslas Square truly marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new era in Europe. Whatever else happens, Gorbachov has won his place in history as liberator.

So much for the inexorable expansionism of Soviet totalitarian dictatorship. With Eastern European countries all going "their way," the Soviet congress voted overwhelmingly last week to grant the three Baltic republics—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—complete economic autonomy. This is the first step toward economic autonomy for all 15 of the Soviet socialist republics.

"*Perestroika* has turned into national liberation movements," Georgian historian Gia Zhorzholiani, organizer of the Tiflis Democratic Club, told a recent symposium organized in Paris by the French Socialists. The symposium was remarkable for the variety of viewpoints and the common preoccupation with the centrifugal movement threatening to tear apart the Soviet Union itself. Zhorzholiani said he would like to see a certain restoration of Georgia's Christian traditions. But he stressed that the "collapse of a great nuclear power would be a disaster for everyone, not in the interest of anyone." The solution would be to create "real republics" and develop their common interests, he said, adding that self-determination requires meticulous preparation.

But things are moving faster than anyone imagined. "We face an avalanche of unsolvable problems," said Yuri Levada, who pioneered Soviet sociology in the '60s.

Estonian economist Mikhail Bronstein presides over the committee responsible for designing out the economic independence of the republics. He has been studying the European Common Market and West Germany's federalism as models. He is alarmed, he said, at the prospect of violent clashes between Estonian nationalists demanding



Perestroika's cauldron on verge of boiling over

full independence and the paramilitary units formed by the self-styled "internationalist movement," made up of Russian and other non-Estonian residents of Estonia who want to stay in the USSR.

Arguments between the adversaries and champions of Estonian independence tend to be on emotional grounds. Bronstein is more pragmatic, saying Estonia can't go back to 1940, when it was integrated into the West European economy. "We have lost our markets in the West and can't get them back," he said. He has studied the chances of breaking into the West German market: "zero." Maybe a couple of "exotic" items could be sold in France, he said, but basically, "our markets are in the East."

The boiling point: Uzbek writer Timur Pulatov vividly described the disastrous state of Central Asia in general and his Soviet republic of Uzbekistan in particular, where cotton monoculture has ruined all other agriculture as well as the environment and social structures. Water resources are threatened, more than 20 percent of the population lives below the poverty level, in all of Central Asia there are 5 million unemployed. Jobless youth frequently attack ethnic minorities in battles over dwindling resources.

"We're living in a boiling pot that's about to boil over," Pulatov said. Because the ecologically disastrous economy was the result of state planning, he said, the Russians are blamed and Russophobia is on the rise. Pulatov said such sentiments are unfair because Russians have suffered along with everyone else.

"Extremists seem to think independence will solve all their problems," he said. "But the interconnections are inextricable. In Central Asia, I don't think we're ready for independence." Uzbekistan lacks experts. "I'd gladly give up my place in this symposium to an Uzbek economist if there were one," he said wryly. "But in our country, writers substitute for all the professions."

Gorbachov, he said, "reminds us of [Alexander] Kerensky," the liberal prime minister in the 1917 government that overthrew the czar and was later overthrown by Lenin's Bolsheviks. Kerensky was a Russian leader who forgot about the empire. Lenin, however, had an imperial strategy and mobilized the empire with an ideology of class struggle,

"finding class enemies everywhere." Like Kerensky, "Gorbachov is a Russian leader, not the leader of Stalin's empire," Pulatov said, adding that he'd be much more successful if he had only Russia to govern.

The way things are going, Gorbachov might soon enjoy that condition for success.

Moscow historian Alexei Salmin spoke of a sort of "paralysis" among the Russians today. For the first time, he said, there is a "mass isolationism" among broad sectors of the Russian population whose mixed feelings of shame and magnanimity toward other peoples add up to a sort of "let them go, to the devil or wherever they want" attitude.

This unprecedented indifference may combine with growing interest in the "rebirth of the Russian nation," he said. The Soviet Union cannot in practical terms break into its 800 ethnic pieces, Salmin said. Certain republics that are historic states may leave, but even so, he said, "Russia would remain a vast pluri-ethnic state with Russians in the majority."

Public opinion surveys show that 60 to 70 percent of Russians polled are willing to allow the Baltic States complete independence.

The danger, however, is that the minority hostile to the breakup of the Soviet Union includes leaders of the armed forces, who could mount a coup to preserve the USSR and their concept of national security.

Shifting perspective: The reformers' only hope is to move decisively from military achievements to economic success as a measuring stick for national satisfaction before the avalanche carries them all away.

"We face an avalanche of unsolvable problems," said Yuri Levada, who pioneered Soviet sociology in the '60s.

The reformers want joint ventures and removal of artificial obstacles, such as controls by the Coordinating Committee for the Free World Member Countries (COCOM) that filter Western exports, supposedly to prevent the Soviets from getting advanced military technology. "We already have advanced mil-

itary technology," said Gorbachov economic adviser Oleg Bogomolov, adding that it's the rest they want.

The dangers posed by the breakup of the empire are heightened immeasurably by mass dissatisfaction with economic reforms.

The compelling reason for surrendering the monopoly on power is to get the people themselves to take responsibility for economic reforms that may be necessary but unpopular—such as eliminating subsidies and thus raising prices. But Soviet experts are starting to worry that this may not work in the Soviet Union. The collective ethic remains strong. The cooperatives, introduced as a first experiment in free enterprise, are extremely unpopular. They have tended to specialize in distribution rather than production, using connections to buy up rare goods that are then sold at higher prices than in the state-subsidized stores. Cooperatives are blamed for contributing to shortages and higher prices. The spectacle of a few getting rich at the expense of others offends the deeply ingrained egalitarianism.

Polls indicate that the Soviets prefer rationing to higher prices as a way of regulating shortages.

Andranik Migranian, a sort of Soviet "new philosopher," said Gorbachov's reform government has fallen into a "trap of democratization," paralyzing its own power before new values have been established. Even the new democratic congress is losing legitimacy as it fails to solve the economic problems, he said. This line of thinking leads to the idea that the Soviet Union needs a period of "authoritarian" rule as a transition toward a free-market, democratic society.

Sociologist Leonid Gordon tried to clarify the political battles over *perestroika* by situating the various schools of thought according to a double axis representing attitudes toward political and economic organization (see diagram). Gorbachov, he said, is a centrist reformer. The liberal reformers are in the upper left, hoping to combine the free market with political democracy. So-called conservatives, advocates of the authoritarian-planned economy, would be in the lower right. In the upper right are the "authoritarian modernizers," who want to impose the free market and save democracy for later.

Gordon said the people, the workers, tend toward the anti-market left, the lower left side of the diagram, favorable to democratic political reforms but hostile to an unregulated free-market economy.

Reformist intellectuals seem to think that what the people want is impossible. It may well be impossible in the sense that the experts don't know how to provide it, if only because they lack accurate economic data. The Soviet command economy involved so much figure-juggling, secrecy and cheating that serious planning is scarcely possible. As some observe, the best planned economies are in the capitalist West.

Gordon's observations point up something the liberal intellectuals prefer to overlook: the absence of real social equality that makes ordinary working people balk at making economic sacrifices before those they consider more privileged—including the liberal intellectuals themselves. Gordon points to the striking miners' reasonable demands as a positive example of a truly popular democracy.

Signposts in an avalanche. □

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By Joel Bleifuss

A dance with the devil

The *New Republic*, the voice of so-called responsible liberalism, recently weighed in with an editorial on the civil war in El Salvador. Titled "The El Salvador Horror," it reads in part: "The atmosphere for negotiating ... surely has been poisoned by the brutality of warfare over the past two weeks, which started with an FMLN attempt to assassinate its negotiating partners, the top civilian and military leaders of the country. A thousand people were killed as rebels took refuge in civilian houses, which the military invaded, strafed and bombed. And then six Jesuit priests were butchered—almost certainly, Bush administration officials say, by right-wing elements of the Salvadoran military.... [The FMLN may] have hoped to provoke right-wing repression that, in turn, would lead to popular discontent, a U.S. aid cutoff, and, ultimately, a Communist victory. Even though the FMLN seems to have been beaten badly in combat, it's not at all clear that its long-run strategy has been defeated. That depends on [President Alfredo] Cristiani cleansing his regime of fascist killers (who are, in effect, allies of the FMLN) and establishing a basis for social and economic justice and political reconciliation."

The best thing one can say about the *New Republic* is that it's wrong. Let's count the ways. First, the editorial failed to mention that the negotiations were broken off by the FMLN November 2, two days after 10 Salvadoran trade union leaders were killed in a bomb attack on their union headquarters. According to *Meso-america*, the Costa Rican-based newsletter edited by Tony Avirgan, the FMLN said it withdrew from the talks because it did not want the negotiations to be used as a cover for internal repression and for Cristiani to gain international support as a "moderate."

Second, the *New Republic*, saying "a thousand people were killed as rebels took refuge in civilian houses," places primary blame for those deaths on the FMLN. But, as the rebels have demonstrated, if those "civilian houses" had been located in the wealthy, and recently occupied, neighborhood of Escalon, the Salvadoran air force would not have dropped its bombs and very few people would have been killed.

Third, the *New Republic* gives the Bush administration credit for taking charge of the situation and identifying the killers of the six Jesuits as "almost certainly ... right-wing elements of the Salvadoran military." The editorial does not mention that the administration made this discovery reluctantly. Initially, Ambassador William Walker condemned the killings, saying it had yet to be determined whether "dogs on the left or dogs on the right" had done the murderous work.

Fourth, the editorial insinuates that the FMLN has "provok[ed] right-wing repression" to further its own ends. The *New Republic* fails to note that El Salvador's military death squads, through the nine years of Reagan and now Bush, have never before needed provocation to torture and kill—something they have managed to do with impunity.

Fifth, the *New Republic* is operating from the mistaken assumption that President Cristiani controls what happens in El Salvador. He doesn't, and therefore he is unable to "cleans[e] his regime of fascist killers," as the *New Republic* wishes. The fascist killers in the military and their supporters in the agro-export sector of the economy run the regime, backed by U.S. dollars and misguided opinion makers like the *New Republic*.

Blacklist for a new generation

Brent Bozell III, the 34-year-old son of a former *National Review* editor, wants to expose the leftist leanings of actors and rock musicians. To that end, he has established *TV etc.*, a bimonthly newsletter that "examines the political biases of the entertainment world." According to the *Rolling Stone's* David Browne, Bozell names names and prints lists. Like a list of the musicians who put together the Greenpeace album *Rainbow Warriors*—David Byrne, Chrissie Hynde, Annie Lennox, Peter Gabriel and others. He also has a list of musicians who traveled to Moscow "in the name of *glasnost*, *perestroika* and money"—Bon Jovi, Elton John and Billy Joel. Some artists receive individual attention. Lou Reed gets slammed for his latest album, *New York*, because, according to Bozell, Reed's "fixation on socioeconomic ills precludes all mention that the vast majority of Americans are content." Jackson Browne is condemned because *World in Motion* details what Bozell calls the "now threadbare conspiracy allega-



One of Chicago's anti-racist skinheads and friend.

Anti-racist skinheads fight back

"Anti-racist skinhead" is not an oxymoron, but rather the way a growing number of skinheads describe themselves. These unlikely crusaders for racial harmony are trying to redefine the popular image of skinheads and cleanse the skinhead scene of racist elements.

"There is a struggle going on within the skinhead movement," says Daniel Levitas, executive director of the Center for Democratic Renewal, an Atlanta-based organization that monitors hate groups. "The movement is in flux politically. It could go in any direction."

On one side are anti-racist skinheads who resent the negative image created by racist skinheads. On the other side are skinheads with links to the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party and White Aryan Resistance. In the middle are youthful recruits, alienated and apolitical, who are being wooed by both sides.

Kieran, an 18-year-old Minneapolis skinhead, espouses an anti-racist, anti-nationalist philosophy with surprising clarity. He says his views are closer to the traditions of the skinhead movement than the racist gobbledegook spewed by white-power skins.

"The origins of the movement came from black Jamaican music,

which was exported to England in the form of reggae, soul and ska and shared with white working-class people. It was always a multiracial thing and always embedded with working-class politics that are very much against racism."

Kieran hangs with a multiracial—black, white, native American, Hispanic—skinhead group called the Baldies. The Baldies, he says, were largely apolitical until the White Knights, a Nazi skinhead group, came on the Minneapolis scene. What began as hostile glances and words escalated to a near war between the two groups. Ultimately, says Kieran, the Baldies prevailed. "We beat the Nazis.... We kicked them out of Minneapolis."

In order to keep Nazi skinheads on the defensive and keep tabs on their activities, the Baldies began to network with other Midwestern anti-racist skinheads. Two groups were founded—Anti-Racist Action, an alliance with SHOC (Skinheads of Chicago) and the Syndicate, which includes anti-racist skinhead groups from Chicago; Cincinnati; Indianapolis; Lawrence, Kansas; Des Moines, Iowa; and Winnipeg.

Anti-racist skinhead groups have emerged elsewhere. Greg Lee, past president of the San Fernando Valley, Calif., chapter of SHARP (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), explains that he and other anti-racist skinheads in suburban Los Angeles organized "to protect our scene."

Lee, who is black, was attracted to the scene because he liked the music, the look, the attitude and the girls. But he and his friends didn't like getting hassled at clubs by white-power skinheads. Lee describes SHARP as more of an alliance of like-minded people than a formal organization. "What links us together," he says, "is our hatred of racism and [our desire] to be together and have a good time." SHARP activities include the social—picnics in a local park—and the political—picketing an appearance of a band known to attract Nazi skins.

Anti-racist skinhead groups have helped reduce the level of hate crimes in those cities where they've appeared, says John Mozzochi, who heads Portland's Coalition for Human Dignity, a group that monitors hate violence in the Northwest. Portland, he says, is not one of those cities; hate crimes there have risen to alarming proportions. "Part of the reason is because we don't have multiracial, anti-racist skinhead organizations who are willing to defend the subculture and deny [racists] the space to organize."

While many applaud the efforts of anti-racist skinheads to reclaim what they believe to be their movement's tradition of racial harmony, some are appalled by their tactics—which often include brute force.

"Nobody says they are non-violent," explains Levitas of the Center for Democratic Renewal.

"Confronting" Nazis is how anti-racist skinheads describe their interactions with their white-power foes. When pushed to explain what "confronting" means, Kieran says, "We don't have a discussion over tea with them. We fight them and let them know they're not welcome here."

While anti-racist skinheads claim their white-power counterparts may descend en masse on a lone victim,

anti-racist skins have been known to employ the same tactics.

Skokie, Ill., police found Scott Gravatt, a white-power skinhead and drifter, hog-tied in front of the Skokie Holocaust memorial with his Nazi armband stuffed in his mouth. Bloody, non-fatal wounds to his face and torso indicated that he had been beaten and "booted." Charged for the offense were five anti-racist skins who had apparently tormented

Gravatt for hours. The five were arrested soon after the attack when one of the assailants boasted of the "confrontation" to a radio station. Charges were later dropped when the defendant disappeared.

Insisting "confrontations" are a small part of the scene, Kieran says they're sometimes necessary. "It's not something we're happy about. But what other choice do we have?"

—Timothy Stirton

Possession of watering equipment with intent to germinate

When the Supreme Court affixed an asterisk to the Fourth Amendment and permitted Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents in helicopters to peer over the tall fences that were designed to keep them out, the nation's marijuana growers moved indoors. Inspired by tough sentences against traffickers in the U.S. and Northern European success in indoor vegetable cultivation, one of the U.S.' largest cash crops went the way of the Dutch tomato: high tech.

The DEA estimates that domestic production provides 25 percent of the marijuana available in the U.S., mostly high-potency sinsemilla. Drug czar William Bennett believes that the DEA's war against domestic pot should become a benchmark of the nation's anti-drug resolve. And thus was born operation Green Merchant, the code name for a series of DEA raids on high-tech garden-supply stores in 42 states.

In the raids DEA agents seized mailing lists and business records. They then began to visit the homes of customers on the lists. In Seattle, where Bennett spoke to the South Seattle Community and Police Partnership the night before operation Green Merchant was launched, the entire inventories of at least five garden-supply stores were seized. In some cases, corporate bank assets were frozen as well, preventing the stores from restocking inventories or paying their bills.

The DEA reported that prior to the raids United Parcel Service logs had been subpoenaed. The names of people who have accepted delivery of garden products from the 65 stores under investigation are now in DEA hands.

Within days of these raids, customers of the stores began complaining that they were also raided. The DEA arrested 191 people in raids on October 26 and 27.

Garden-supply store proprietors on the West Coast, in the South and in the Midwest report that their mail-order customers are being visited by DEA agents asking to inspect their premises without search warrants. In Pomona, Calif., DEA agents literally broke down the door and entered the home of one customer, brandishing automatic weapons. Ac-

cording to David Reid Fleming of Diamond Lights Inc., the agents discovered no illegal substances but succeeded in "scaring the bejesus" out of the wife of a customer who grows orchids. For unknown reasons, the agents carted off the prized ornamental flowers. "They've been harassing our customers to no end," complains Fleming, who also reports that another customer, a senior member of the American Orchid Society, suffered from the same assumption of guilt when his North Carolina home was stormed by agents.

Store owners who have been raided accuse the DEA of illegal entrapment. Bill Ross of East Coast Hydroponics in Staten Island, N.Y., whose business records were seized by DEA agents, says, "I threw these [DEA agents] out for trying to entrap me [by asking for assistance growing marijuana] more than once." Ross says that when the agents eventually came back "acting like gentlemen" and asked him how to grow tomatoes and tulips, he assisted them. The affidavit for the subpoena of Ross' records uses these conversations about tomato cultivation as a basis for the search, on the assumption that when he referred to "tomatoes" he was really talking about marijuana.

All the stores raided advertise in either *High Times* or *Sinsemilla Tips*,

magazines that provide legal and horticultural advice to marijuana enthusiasts. Don Crespino, of Urban Tek in Oklahoma City, says that one of the agents searching his premises told him, "Your advertisement in *High Times* is what got you in trouble." Crespino told the agent that he didn't realize it was illegal to advertise there. To which the agent responded, "After today it won't be. [*High Times*] will be closed."

Sinsemilla Tips publisher Tom Alexander cites comments made by a DEA agent as evidence that operation Green Merchant is really a scheme to go after the marijuana-partial press. Earlier this year the former head of the California-based Campaign Against Marijuana Production (CAMP), DEA agent Charles Stowell, debated Alexander on the subject of marijuana on KCBS radio in San Francisco. According to radio host Bob McCormick, Stowell told Alexander, "You're hiding behind the First Amendment," and likened Alexander to a child pornographer. The DEA can't close Alexander's magazine because of the constitutional right to freedom of speech. But now that nearly all of Alexander's sources of advertising revenue have had their assets seized or their customers harassed, the DEA appears to have found a back door to his editorial page.

—Matthew Reiss

TOOLS OF CRIME
#502



tions" against Oliver North. The newsletter is distributed to about 5,000 political and entertainment industry officials. As Art Kropp, president of People for the American Way puts it, "TV etc. is a backhanded way of establishing a new blacklist."

Go north, sick man

According to a recent poll by Louis Harris and the Harvard University School of Public Health, the majority of Canadians like their national health-care system. In Canada the government provides health care to everyone and sets limits on doctors' fees (see story on page 12). Patients can choose which doctors and hospitals they patronize. That, of course, is not the case in the U.S., where, according to the survey, 89 percent of Americans feel our health-care system is fundamentally flawed. Nearly two-thirds of Americans polled said they would swap the U.S. system for the Canadian.

Why stop with health care?

Americans may soon be swapping citizenship. Editors at *The Futurist*, the mouthpiece of the World Future Society of Bethesda, Md., have chosen the 10 most thought-provoking predictions of the past year, among which was, "The greenhouse effect may cause Canada's population to surpass that of the U.S. as Americans emigrate to Canada's more temperate climate."

Books banned in Israel

Israel is fighting the uprising in the Occupied Territories not just by patrolling the streets but by controlling what Palestinians read. The Israel Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories recently received a letter from Israeli censor Liat Menachmi explaining the government's criteria for banning books. Menachmi writes, "Books are banned if they are liable to damage state security, public safety or public order." Journalist Mitchell Kaidy reports the banned books include *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *The Lover* by Palestinian author Ghassan Kana-fani and *The Battle for Peace* by Ezer Weizman, Israel's minister of science, who is an advocate of peace with the Palestinians.

See no evil

President Bush recently met in the White House with members of the Black Leadership Forum, including representatives from the NAACP, the National Urban League, Operation PUSH and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Lawrence M. O'Rourke reports in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "The black leaders said they were pleased with the president's commitment to pursue strong civil-rights enforcement. The leaders, however, said they were surprised when Bush said he did not know there was a rising level of racial harassment against blacks on college campuses. Many of the leaders knew that the White House just a few weeks ago arranged a meeting of top civil-rights activists, prosecutors and educators to discuss this disturbing phenomenon. Thus several of the leaders were disappointed when Bush told them that not only was he unaware of the situation but that he hoped the reports were untrue."

Where the programs air on time

On the evening of November 9, the East German government opened the borders. As the night wore on, youthful revelers partied atop the Berlin Wall. Ernest Gill reports in *Variety*, "Hundreds of thousands were literally dancing in the streets through the wee hours of Friday, but West German broadcasters did not deem it necessary to provide live coverage As news teams in West Germany gaped in bewilderment, East German TV news went live with non-stop coverage of the dramatic events, complete with live interviews with guards as they hacked away at the Berlin Wall." It seems West German broadcasters had programming schedules to follow. Public stations in West Berlin and northern West Germany did air a special late-evening report on the wall's demise, but that report "was abruptly axed shortly before midnight, when the real exodus was getting started, to make way for an art documentary entitled, *The Japanese Are Coming*."

News clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647. Include your address and phone number.

By David Moberg

THIS MAY NOT BE THE VERY WORST OF TIMES for strikes, but it's hardly the best of times either. Unions can win, contrary to popular impressions, but the costs are great and the deck is stacked against them.

After long, tough walkouts, unions at Boeing and Nynex were able in the week before Thanksgiving to win big victories on principles but relatively modest financial settlements. But at the same time, in the crusade to save Eastern Airlines from Frank Lorenzo, the pilots' and flight attendants' unions decided to throw in the towel after nearly nine months on sympathy strikes, leaving the Machinists union to carry on alone. Yet even there, the strike cost an already weak Eastern so dearly that it may not survive, and the Machinist strikers still retain some leverage and internal solidarity.

The Boeing and Nynex strikes involved clashes over fundamentals, not just division of the pie at these two large, prosperous companies. Machinists at Boeing fought for—and won—restrictions on mandatory overtime that was destroying many workers' personal and family lives. They also regained regular annual wage increases, after having received only lump-sum bonuses for each of the past six years. Boeing has saved immense sums of money by forcing overtime

LABOR

rather than hiring new employees and by avoiding basic hourly wage increases. The union estimated these increases would have cost Boeing 3.5 times the amount of simple bonus payments, because wage increases compound and affect benefits such as pensions and vacations.

Faced with a growing health-care crisis, many employers have sought to shift medical costs to workers. Telephone unions—the Communications Workers (CWA) and Electrical Workers (IBEW)—successfully resisted such efforts in AT&T and regional Bell company contracts this year, but nowhere was the fight as intense as at Nynex in the Northeast. The CWA responded to corporate demands with cost-containment proposals, as do most unions, and called for a national health plan as the only real solution. Although companies' productivity increases often offset rising health costs, higher medical costs ultimately mean lower gains elsewhere for workers. Yet contrary to corporate claims, Nynex workers won wage hikes—about 9.6 percent over three years—comparable to those at other Bell companies. The workers agreed to give up only company-proposed bonuses they didn't want, in order to avoid health-insurance payments of \$1,500 a year that would have surely risen much higher.

The benefits of education: Both strikes proved successful largely because the unions had conducted yearlong person-to-person educational campaigns through a trained network of shop stewards or activists, who at Nynex also built solidarity through symbolic on-the-job protests. "We had never been so ready so early, and people understood what the issue [of health-care costs] was about," said George Kohl, administrative assistant to CWA President Morton Bahr. A yearlong campaign to personally deliver and discuss pamphlets on individual

Strikers' creative tactics overcome anti-union odds

issues convinced young Boeing workers—most of the 41 percent of the 57,000 strikers who had less than two years' seniority—of the older workers' conviction that bonuses were no substitute for higher wages. "The old art of pamphleteering works if you do it right," said Machinist local communications director Jack Daniels. "Tom Paine would have been proud of us."

Boeing was backlogged with orders and very profitable, and its workers were skilled, irreplaceable and solid (only 3 percent crossed the picket line in eight weeks)—making the strike a textbook confrontation. Nynex was highly automated, and could cover basic service by using managers and temporary replacements working long hours. But new installations and repair work suffered, as only one percent of workers crossed picket lines during the 16-week strike. CWA used its activist network creatively, picketing work crews in their manholes and executives at awards dinners—a strategy described as "devastating" in an internal management memo. It reached out for support from other unions, pension funds, international allies and customers (in a modest effort to get them to withhold phone-bill payments). It worked hard to maintain close ties with the IBEW workers, seen as the weak link by management because they had no strike fund. And taking advantage of the public regulation of utilities, the union got 130 New York state legislators to sign an ad opposing a \$360 million rate hike for New York Telephone, a Nynex subsidiary.

The mad capitalist: Nynex and Boeing managers may have taken tough stances, but they weren't out to break the unions and weren't crazy—which was precisely what the unions faced with Lorenzo at Eastern. In a

One of Frank Lorenzo's closest friends described the Eastern Airlines head as representative of "the capitalist ethic at its far, far extreme, its Ku Klux Klan extreme."

December *Vanity Fair* profile, one of his closest longtime friends describes Lorenzo, chairman of Texas Air (which owns Eastern and Continental), as representative of "the capitalist ethic at its far, far extreme, its Ku Klux Klan extreme."

Lorenzo, who used the bankruptcy laws in 1983 to break the unions at Continental, has effectively used bankruptcy court during the strike as a shield to block union-backed buyouts, interfere with labor rights and hold off creditors while he cannibalized Eastern—selling planes, gates and the profitable shuttle—and poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a money-losing effort to keep planes in the air.

He has had a strategic ally in the White House. Lorenzo gave George Bush and the

Republicans more than \$100,000 last year, and Bush's chief legislative aide is a former Texas Air vice president. Bush early on rejected presidential fact-finding, then just before Thanksgiving vetoed a blue-ribbon com-

The Communications Workers picketed work crews in their manholes and executives at awards dinners—a strategy a Nynex management memo called "devastating."

mission to investigate the strike, a commission that had been overwhelmingly approved by Congress.

The veto triggered the pilots' abandonment of the strike, which led the flight attendants to follow suit. After the veto, pilots began to believe, as Capt. John Knudson said, that "we're going to have to stand down and wait for the system to fix itself. We've done everything we can at this point." Leaders in both unions feared that even more of their members would cross the picket line. By early November about one-fourth of pilots and flight attendants—but only 300 of 8,500 Machinist mechanics and ramp workers—had returned to work. Both sympathy strikes had been amazingly strong at the beginning, but after top pilots' union leaders tried to end the strike in August, a significant minority of pilots, later followed by attendants, crossed the picket line despite an overwhelming vote to continue the strike. The leaders' misguided action "did destabilize the unity of the pilots," Knudson said. "It's unfortunate that happened."

Pilots' union leaders and non-Eastern pilots, restive over big strike-benefit costs, pressured Eastern pilots to return if Bush vetoed the commission. This was the culmination of a strategy that had all along relied far too heavily on political lobbying, courtroom maneuvers and financial strategies and had not simultaneously carried on enough grass-roots, disruptive action.

Machinists and flight attendants had been a bit more aggressive with demonstrations, boycott appeals and lobbying of travel agents not to book Eastern or Continental. There was unprecedented cooperation among the often-combative unions during the strike, and most pilots, flight attendants and mechanics still express strong mutual support despite their divergent decisions. But as Machinist Local 796 President-elect Paul Bacich said, "The whole strike could have been, and still can be, better coordinated."

Many Machinists and flight attendants wanted more militant action and aggressive public outreach: non-violent civil disobedience, "stall-ins" at airports, secondary boy-

cotts on railroads, militant picketing, refusal by other Machinists to handle Eastern planes or baggage. But there were many constraints. International union leaders feared injunctions and fines. Also, since they were seeking a buyer while striking, union leaders feared an Eastern lawsuit, under federal racketeering statutes, that would accuse them of conspiring to damage Eastern in order to buy it more cheaply.

Strikers started with a vast reservoir of public support and antipathy towards Lorenzo. Union leaders cautioned against alienating that support—but it could also have been argued, Bacich said, that "if you have that popular support, you can risk civil disobedience." Although the Machinists initiated the strike, they did not have a developed strategy, and the pilots' critical support gave them heavy strategic influence. Many cautious pilots saw militant actions as not befitting their professional self-image. Finally, the AFL-CIO's ultimately disappointing "Fairness at Eastern" campaign, which raised money, held press conferences, mobilized pickets and lobbied Congress for the commission, opposed militant actions.

Eastern's wasteland: Despite the pilots' and flight attendants' return, the strike isn't over. Lorenzo still lacks experienced mechanics and is desperately attempting to delay or avoid comprehensive airplane examinations and major structural modifications ordered by the Federal Aviation Administration. Eastern is also short of planes and leases many at great cost from Continental. And although it flies 75 percent of its pre-strike flights, Eastern's passenger loads are well below average despite money-losing fares, and the company is losing \$2 million to \$3 million a day. Even Continental has been barely profitable, and it appears the industry may be entering an economically tough period. Lorenzo has been unable to deliver \$200 million promised to Eastern creditors and is finding it harder to raise capital on Wall Street.

Lorenzo now faces fights from flight attendants and pilots over who can be recalled. All the unions will fight for an override of Bush's veto of the blue-ribbon commission. Machinists are now evading legal constraints on picketing by having groups with anti-Lorenzo T-shirts roam airport concourses. Belatedly, the unions have also contacted Scandinavian and other European unions, who could pressure the Scandinavian Airlines System, which owns 10 percent of Texas Air. If the Machinists can keep their ranks solid, the strike can still wound a weakened Eastern, bloodied as much by its owner as its workers. Some creditors are already pushing for sale of Eastern's lucrative Latin American routes, a move that could be the line's death knell.

Against a crazed anti-union zealot, the unions mounted an impressive strike, unique in its fight against the employer's plan to defeat its unions by dismantling the company. Although the unions might have accomplished more with greater creative militancy—which the Machinists could still use—the strike sent a message of something more than labor's difficulties. "Lorenzo paid an incredible price and lost over a billion dollars," said Nancy Tauss, vice president of the flight attendants' union. "Although we certainly wish there'd been a different outcome, we do think other employers won't be willing to follow in Lorenzo's footsteps." □

By Salim Muwakkil

THE TRIUMPHS OF MODERATE AFRICAN-AMERICAN candidates in the recent off-year elections have triggered an avalanche of predictions about Jesse Jackson's political demise. Mainstream pundits are virtually falling over themselves delivering obituaries of his National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) and the political style it embodies. Indeed, an alien observer could easily conclude that the election results were notable less as unprecedented victories for

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a host of black candidates than as one grand defeat for Jackson.

What accounts for this blatant Jackson-bashing? It certainly isn't backed up by evidence. To the contrary, the results of these historic elections can easily be traced to Jackson's groundbreaking efforts. In 1988, for instance, Jackson became the first black presidential candidate to win Virginia's Democratic primary. One year later Douglas Wilder is the state's first black governor. That's no coincidence.

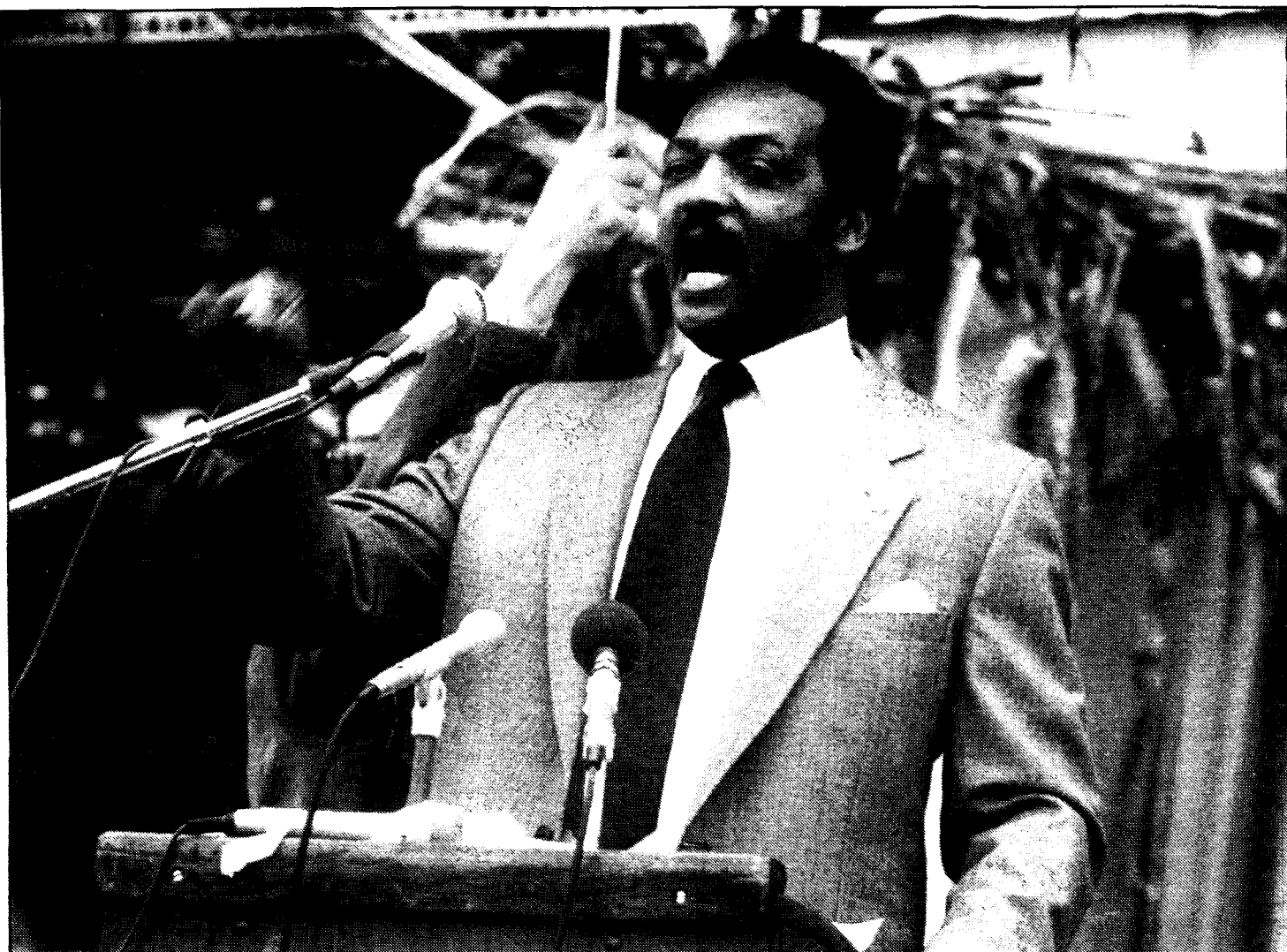
Candidate Jackson also carried New York City in the 1988 Democratic primary. And in a public feud with Edward Koch—who said Jews would be "crazy" to vote for him in the primary—Jackson took the moral high ground and helped accelerate the feisty mayor's decline. This allowed Jackson-supporter David Dinkins to defeat Koch in the primary and squeak by Rudolph Giuliani to become the city's first African-American mayor.

Ubiquitous footprints: John Daniels and Norman Rice, the first black mayors of New Haven, Conn., and Seattle, respectively, both strongly supported Jackson's 1988 campaign, as did the new mayors of Atlanta and Cleveland. In fact, very few spots on the modern political landscape are untouched by Jackson's footprints; his influence is ubiquitous. Yet mainstream pundits gleefully dismiss him as yesterday's news.

"The media reaction is simply a case of wish fulfillment," says William Strickland, associate professor of politics at the University of Massachusetts and New England coordinator of Jackson's 1988 campaign. "Press pundits want to emphasize the so-called crossover aspect of the race to push the notion that the politics of conciliation are the politics of the future," Strickland added. "But the most significant aspect of both the Virginia and New York City races was that the undistinguished white candidate still pulled most of the white votes. Wilder was head-and-shoulders above [Marshall] Coleman in qualifications, and in New York, Giuliani's only asset was his whiteness."

Strickland did not deny, however, that the current crop of moderates are of a different political breed from Jackson. One reason the mainstream so enthusiastically celebrates their victories, he says, is that they present a less-demanding alternative to Jackson's call for a structural overhaul of the system. Although careful to distinguish Dinkins' more progressive policies from those of Wilder, Strickland devalues both their victories as desperate attempts to put "a black face on flawed institutions. They're playing out an old tune," he said, "while the world needs new music."

Tuneless campaigns: But advocates of this new strategy would argue that their tunes are not old—they're just not playing music. The Baptist preacher-based use of rhetorical eloquence to evoke an epic vision—the



Public clashes with the newly ascended black moderates may help Jesse Jackson show that his message is ideological, not racial.

Black moderates' wins inspire Jesse-bashers

"music" of traditional black politics—has no place in their nuts-and-bolts political repertoire. Nor do they "run against the establishment, or pose issues as 'us vs. them,'" said William Schneider, a senior analyst with the American Enterprise Institute.

"They have a different style, and it works," he added. "It means that blacks can work inside the system and outside the system. It's the march of progress that every ethnic group has discovered."

Jackson disagrees with parts of that analysis, arguing that African-Americans have long sought to appeal to white voters but seldom received white votes. Black candidates' success in these recent elections is less a function of their altered tactics, Jackson insists, than it is of "the maturing of the mind of white America." In the '60s, "we integrated the lunch counters and the libraries, and now we are integrating the psyche and the mind of white America, replacing insecurity and unfounded fears with maturity," he said.

But Jackson acknowledges the differences between himself and politicians like Wilder or Chester Jenkins, the new black mayor of Durham, N.C. Jackson conceded that Wilder did not invite him in to campaign in Virginia, but said that "it is also true that he didn't invite [AFL-CIO President] Lane Kirkland or [Massachusetts Sen. Edward] Kennedy or [New York Gov. Mario] Cuomo."

Dueling blacks: Speaking before members of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) a few days after his election, Wilder made his political inclinations clear. In essence, he told the mostly white group of mod-

erate Democrats that he was their man. Echoing much of the DLC line on issues like "mainstream values," free enterprise, holding the line on taxes and a bipartisan foreign policy, Wilder clearly endorsed the group's notion that the Democratic Party must focus on mainstream America to regain its lost eminence. He was applauded lustily.

This, of course, is in direct opposition to the Jackson thesis that argues the Democrats can best expand their support by going after the unregistered poor and "locked out" members of society. It seems clear that Wilder will not shrink from the role that national Democrats have hoped—even prayed—he would play as a black counterbalance to Jack-

Black candidates' recent wins are due less to new tactics, Jackson insists, than to "the maturing of the mind of white America."

son's progressivism.

But it's possible that the victories of Wilder and the others will do for the Jackson effort what eight years of campaigning has not: lighten the Rainbow. Through public clashes with the newly ascended black moderates, Jackson will be better able to demonstrate that his political message is ideological rather than racial. This hard-won distinction may attract many more white votes should he decide to run for something.

"Even with his supposed liabilities Jackson pulled 17 percent of the white vote in the 1988 primaries," noted Cheryl Miller, a senior research associate and visiting scholar at the Joint Center for Political Studies, a Washington-based think tank that focuses on black concerns. One thing often lost in discussions of Jackson's political appeal is his campaigns' transracial focus.

Diversity on display: Jackson couched his political message in the civil-rights vernacular, and although that language was linked to blacks in the public mind, it was never intrinsically race-specific. "Jesse was threatening to whites because they chose to see him as threatening," Miller added. "He never said anything threatening to white people. In fact, much of what he said should have been reassuring to them."

According to Miller, the black moderates' emergence is another indication of African-Americans' growing diversity. But the national media is so accustomed to portraying African-Americans in stereotypic monotonies, it has a problem depicting that diversity. "In some ways it's kind of insulting for the mainstream media to tell us that Jesse Jackson is not the right kind of leader for us and Doug Wilder is," she said. "We are a various and multifaceted people, and we have no need for one spokesman."

The conciliators' narrow victories have inspired some black activists to denounce the process as demeaning. "It was sickening to me how Dinkins and Wilder had to bend so far over backward not to say anything that could, that just might, upset white folks," said one caller on a black-oriented radio talk show in Chicago. "And then they both just barely got elected. I just can't stand to see my people become so nondescript, so corny, just to win.... I tell you, if I lived in Virginia I would have boycotted the election to protest Wilder's emasculation as a black man. We need Jesse Jackson to run for something again to put black men on the map."

The radio show's host said most of his callers echoed that view.

By Ken Dermota

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Can Colombia bargain with cocaine kingpins?

THE HOTTEST AND MOST DIVISIVE ISSUE IN war-weary Colombia is whether to negotiate peace with the cocaine lords. This desire to do something before it's too late has champions on the left and right and could involve people as diverse as Nobel prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez and Henry Kissinger.

Colombians and U.S. officials are becoming polarized on the issue as the *narcos* continue to bomb the country in an attempt to force the government to the bargaining table. Those opposed to dialogue have become increasingly repulsed by the idea of negotiating with the killers of the country's most prominent politicians, judges and journalists. But others believe accommodation is necessary to avoid further bloodshed.

Here in the nation's capital, which the citizens have renamed "Bombgotá," some U.S. Embassy officials refuse to take a stand on negotiations with the *narcos*. One official, however, voiced his vehement opposition, saying, "If Colombia negotiates, it will isolate itself from the rest of the world. I'll pack my bags."

Colombia and its drug dealers are looking for a way out of the "total war" they have been locked into since the August slaying of the country's favored presidential candidate, Luis Carlos Galán. The Colombian police have in the last three months pushed the *narcos* against a wall, giving chase last week to two surprised *capos*, or chieftains, of the Medellín cartel who escaped through the woods in their underwear.

They also have been unsuccessful at capturing the cartel's top two leaders, who are now battling the whole of Colombian society with their ultra-right, Salvadoran-style death squads. The goal of Medellín *capos* Pablo Escobar and José Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha is to force Colombia to allow their peaceful retirement among the world's richest men.

Unofficial negotiations have progressed much further than anyone will admit. The negotiators meet in secret, or hide behind a semantic curtain by saying they are merely "listening" to the *narcos* or are "mailboxes" delivering messages to the government. Although President Virgilio Barco's assistant Germán Montoya is among the negotiators, the president denies any knowledge of the talks.

Dangerous liaisons: But Colombians know that the *narcos* met with an old friend of Montoya's, former Colombian official Joaquín Vallejo, who also happens to be Escobar's godfather from back when Escobar's father tended the Vallejo family farm. Vallejo, who hadn't seen Escobar in 30 years, says he was impressed with Escobar's "intelligence and sincerity." Vallejo wrote out in longhand the basis of an agreement he calls a "pre-accord," granting the *narcos* and their death squads amnesty if they hand over their weapons and explosives and leave the drug trade. Vallejo also threw in a provision to demobilize leftist guerrilla groups operating near the *narcos'* plantations.

Vallejo and Montoya are so convinced of the viability of this plan that they suggested including the U.S. in tripartite negotiations, with Kissinger as a possible U.S. representative. They even asked the *narcos* to pay for a U.S. public-relations firm to lobby the U.S. Congress to support negotiations, fearing that the U.S. would act to isolate Colombia

in the world community if it were to act on its own.

Medellín Mayor Juan Gómez Martínez, one of the few politicians to unequivocally support negotiations, keeps a telephone in his desk open to the *narcos* at all times. Gómez is avuncular, outspoken and quick to mention that the *narcos* want him on the negotiating team.

Medellín, once the epicenter of the current war, has become the most peaceful city in Colombia—the result, rumor has it, of negotiations by the mayor. "That's what some say," Gómez says. He also told a Colombian newspaper that peace came to Medellín because "the people disciplined themselves."

There is much speculation about Gómez' motives for supporting negotiations, which he insists be called "dialogue." Some suggest

DRUGS

he's been bought out, others say he merely wants to be first on the negotiations bandwagon, still others say he is trying to protect himself after surviving a *narco* death-squad attack in 1987. Gómez says he just wants to see the violence end. If any—or all—of these possibilities are true, he remains emblematic of a whole society that is afraid and tired but also benefits from the narcodollars. These are powerful, practical incentives toward some kind of accommodation.

The mayor justifies his support for negotiations by pointing to a pact negotiated in mid-November granting the M-19 guerrillas amnesty and access to electoral politics. Rightists such as Gómez sympathize with the *narcos* as daring entrepreneurs with anti-communist ties and cynically place negotiations with *narcos* on the same level as negotiations with politically motivated guerrillas.

Curiously, negotiations have support from the left as well, perhaps because leftists don't want to defeat the pro-negotiation spirit that has benefitted them, but certainly for reasons of national destiny.

The M-19 guerrillas say that the issue of extraditing drug traffickers is an example of U.S. intervention in Colombian affairs. They agree with the drug traffickers' biggest demand in negotiations: that no Colombians

be extradited to the U.S., since they cannot receive a fair trial in an unfamiliar court system in an unfamiliar language.

Certainly it is because of extradition that the *narcos* are waging war against Colombia's institutions and population. The bombings around the country, for instance, have been in the name of "the extraditables." "We're not ready to fight a war on our land to stop drug trafficking," says Angelica Pérez of M-19.

The guerrillas say the answer to the violence—but not the drug trafficking—is to negotiate with Escobar and Gacha. Negotiating their retirement would stop them from funding and training the paramilitary death squads that are terrorizing the cities and killing peasants on the banana plantations.

Strange bedfellows: This is not the first time Colombia has negotiated with the drug lords. In 1984 the *narcos* met with ex-Colombian President Alfonso López Michelsen at the Marriott Hotel in Panama City. Michelsen was there to observe the Panamanian elections, and the *narcos* were in hiding after killing Colombia's justice minister. The *narcos* offered a deal that included destruction of the cocaine fields, eradication of drug use in Colombia, decommissioning the processing labs and airplanes, and the payment of Colombia's national debt—all of which have been dropped from the current proposal, indicating that five years later, the drug dealers now believe they are in a stronger position.

Enrique Santos Calderón edits the Sunday version of *El Tiempo*, Colombia's largest newspaper as well as the country's largest private business. Santos has the aristocratic bearing appropriate to an heir to this fortune and he vehemently opposes negotiating with the *narcos*, as does the greater part of the urban, industrial class who do not want to share power with drug dealers—the *nuevos ricos*, as they are disparagingly called.

Santos questioned the accuracy of a recent telephone poll that said 63 percent of Colombians favor negotiations. He says people are afraid to tell strangers over the phone that they oppose something the drug traffickers favor. He also says public opinion can be swayed by bombs—which are aimed at

making people tire of the war. The longer the bombing drags on, the further the *narcos* can push the public toward talks. "Time is on their side," Santos says.

In a 6,000-word defense of negotiations published in late November, Colombian author García Márquez claimed the drug war will be "long, ruinous and without a future" because the \$65 million in U.S. aid "can't even compare with what the Nicaraguan contras received in eight years: \$2 billion dollars." The U.S. crushed the 1984 negotiations, García Márquez claims, so it could use the drug war as a cover for attacking communists.

Speaking from the offices of *El Espectador*, the newspaper that was bombed by the extraditables in September, newspaper columnist María Jimena Duzán says that after negotiating the retirement of *capos* Escobar and Gacha, their lieutenants, seeking a piece of the pie, would have "an immediate fight among themselves. However, it is better that the *narcos* fight among themselves than to kill ministers, which destabilizes the country."

Colombia—and the U.S.—have already suffered one such "war of the cartels," where the Cali and Medellín cartels locked horns over access to the New York market. Property belonging to each cartel was bombed by the other, and dozens of Colombians were gunned down in New York, Cali, Medellín, Miami and Bogotá.

"It is a fiction that negotiating with Escobar would bring peace," Duzán says. "One of the absurd things about negotiating is: with whom are you going to negotiate? It is a myth that Escobar is in charge—[he is in charge] only in his territory. [Capo] Fidel Castano is among the most violent in the country, and he's not going to negotiate with anybody."

Double trouble: Colombia is in the midst of two crises—the long-term crisis of drug trafficking and the short-term crisis of war. Negotiations can help only with the short-term problem of violence because if the *capos* negotiate their retirement, a dozen of their underlings will jump to take over the business.

It is widely believed that Gacha and Escobar built the paramilitary death squads. If this is true, negotiations might just put an end to the violence and the Medellín cartel will seek to do business in peace, like the Cali cartel. If, on the other hand, some of the lieutenants maintain the rightist connections, negotiations will help neither the violence nor the drug trafficking.

The U.S. remains unconcerned about Colombia's short-term problems, preferring to pursue the interdiction of cocaine destined for the U.S. The U.S. has not, for instance, added a penny to the 100 million peso (\$419,000) reward offered for Gacha and Escobar, since their capture would have little effect on the supply of cocaine to the U.S. Nor has the U.S. made any commitment to place additional pressure on the Medellín cartel, which is responsible for the wave of violence.

Instead, the U.S. places equal emphasis on all the cartels, even though the others have not been implicated in the killing of any judges, politicians or journalists. Said one U.S. Embassy official who refused to be named, "We don't discriminate." □

Ken Dermota is a freelance journalist based in Bogotá.

Colombia is in the midst of two crises—the long-term crisis of drug trafficking and the short-term crisis of war. Negotiations for peace with the drug lords can help only with the short-term problem of violence because if the current chieftains negotiate their retirement, a dozen of their underlings will jump to take over the business.

By Chris Norton

SAN SALVADOR

JUST AS THE 10-DAY REBEL OFFENSIVE HERE appeared to be winding down and guerrilla combatants had slipped out of their strongholds in the working-class districts on the northern edge of the city, the rebels struck again.

Not all the guerrillas had abandoned the capital. Many had circled up onto the San Salvador volcano, which overlooks the cap-

CENTRAL AMERICA

ital, and then swung down on the exclusive Escalon neighborhood in an apparent attempt to show they could bring the war to the manicured lawns of the elite as well as the city's poor neighborhoods.

Although the November 21 operation had focused on the whole neighborhood, U.S. media attention focused almost exclusively on the seizure of the the Sheraton Hotel because of the 12 hapless U.S. Green Berets whom the guerrillas stumbled upon in the hotel's auxiliary tower. Armed to the teeth, they barricaded themselves into their rooms while the rebels slipped away.

The U.S. soldiers declined to leave, however, convinced that the guerrillas had left snipers behind and boobytrapped the hallways and stairwells. On an adrenalin jag, they spent a tense night fearing a rebel attack only to discover in the morning that the guerrillas had long since gone and that they had been alone in the building all night.

It was an apt metaphor for U.S. policy in Central America—macho Green Berets, terrified of a threat that was mostly of their own creation. Hostage to their own fears, they reflected the image of the world's most powerful country acting as if threatened by tiny Nicaragua or a homegrown Third World revolutionary movement like the Salvadoran Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Double delusion: While terrified of a rebel victory in El Salvador, U.S. policymakers had tried to deceive themselves with the belief that their policies were working, that democracy was being built and that the rebels were almost beaten.

But the unprecedented FMLN offensive, in which the rebels seized and held sizable portions of the capital and other major cities for a week, shattered some of the illusions that direct U.S. policy in El Salvador, in much the same way the Tet offensive shook U.S. policy in Vietnam.

As in Vietnam, propagandists in the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador churned out press releases and reports claiming that the leftist guerrillas were on the verge of military defeat and could no longer launch major attacks. According to the Embassy, the rebels were defeated in the countryside and were only able to launch desperate "terrorist" attacks in the city.

Although both the army and the U.S. Embassy were aware the FMLN was planning a major attack in the capital, they were totally unprepared for the scope and audacity of what was to come. They had fallen into the trap of believing their own propaganda.

Fish in the sea: Saturday night, November 11, in one of the working-class districts that surround the capital, a group of friends were having a party. At 8 p.m. two pickup trucks drove up loaded with weapons, and people quickly grabbed the arms and spread out to take up combat positions.

Hundreds of seasoned FMLN combatants had already infiltrated the capital. They were



A wounded victim of the government bombing of San Salvador awaits Green Cross assistance.

U.S. self-delusion exacts brutal price on Salvador

joined by hundreds of city-based "urban commandos," many of whom may have burned a bus or blown up a power line but had never before participated in actual combat. Guerrilla columns also entered the capital from different points.

They simultaneously attacked a score of targets, including the army's First Brigade as well as the home and the official residence of President Alfredo Cristiani, the millionaire coffee grower who has tried to give a more moderate face to the death squad-linked rightist ARENA Party. But these were diversionary attacks. The main rebel objective was to seize, and for the first time hold, major portions of the working-class districts that ring the capital on its northern, eastern and southeastern edges.

By Sunday the guerrillas were building barricades and digging trenches, often with the support of the local population. The army, stretched thin by the nationwide attacks, reacted with air power, indiscriminately bombarding civilians.

Hot metal rained out of the sky. Although it was aimed at guerrillas, it killed and wounded hundreds of civilians. "The airplanes are shooting at us and killing people," screamed one woman in the northern neighborhood of Zacamil. "Please ask them not to bomb us."

Worried about the bad press, U.S. Ambassador William Walker called daily briefings at the U.S. Embassy that were reminiscent of the "four o'clock follies" in Saigon. He tried to minimize the figures of civilian casualties and said the army was acting with "great caution." He admitted, however, "We cannot categorically state that houses have not been hit by [army] helicopters." Meanwhile, a U.S. military source said it would be impossible to dislodge the guerrillas without major civilian casualties.

Terrorized by the bombardment and fearful of more to come, thousands of Salvadorans poured out of the embattled neighborhoods on the city's periphery. Waving makeshift white flags and carrying children in their arms, they fled their homes. They crowded into Catholic churches and the houses of friends or merely camped in parks or downtown streets that were less affected by the fighting.

The bombing and strafing appear to have been part of the army's strategy to force people to leave areas where the guerrillas had dug in. The rebels, on the other hand, had hoped to "liberate" certain areas of the city and provoke a more generalized insurrection.

The fighting was quite different in various parts of the capital. In Zacamil, the rebels dug into a large block of five-story low-rent residential apartments. Although they tried to convince the civilians to stay, most residents fled when the fighting intensified. When they were finally surrounded by the army's elite battalions, the rebels managed to slip out of the area, reportedly crawling through sewers.

In other areas, especially the northern working-class suburb of Mejicanos, a much more sophisticated battle of movement and maneuver was played out. Led by the legendary guerrilla commander Facundo Guardado, the rebels built barricades but moved out of the way of strong army thrusts, reoccupying areas the army moved past.

Slowly the army brought its greater firepower to bear against the guerrilla positions, and on Saturday night, a week after the offen-

The army reacted to the rebel attacks by bombing civilians indiscriminately.

sive began, the bulk of the rebel forces slipped out of Mejicanos in the early morning hours and moved north through the gullies.

As the army gradually regained control of the situation, the security forces began pursuing groups it considered sympathetic to the guerrillas. The Lutheran, Baptist and Episcopal churches were raided, and more than 20 foreigners working with them were arrested and deported.

Civilian killings: Norma Guirola de Herrera, the head of a Salvadoran women's group, was picked up by soldiers while doing emergency medical work in San Marcos. She and two others were discovered dead shortly after.

But most shocking of all were the brutal November 16 murders of six Jesuit priests, including the rector and vice rector of Cen-

tral American University (UCA). At least two witnesses say they saw approximately 30 uniformed men enter the compound where the priests lived at 3 a.m. The men dragged the priests from their rooms and took them in front of the residence, where they shot them to death. They then killed the cook and her 15-year-old daughter to eliminate witnesses.

Although the entire area was heavily militarized and the attack occurred during a dusk-to-dawn curfew, the group took the time to go downstairs and burn videotapes and shoot up computers and vehicles.

The government and the Salvadoran military, of course, denied any participation in the killings, but Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas said that the killers were either "the military or paramilitaries intimately connected with the military." A Jesuit spokesman noted it would have been impossible for a large group of armed men to operate during the curfew without at least the cooperation of the military. Suspicion centers on the treasury police, who have one of the worst human-rights records and who had searched the Jesuit residence two nights before the murders.

U.S. Ambassador Walker called the killers "animals," and President Cristiani promised to conduct an "exhaustive investigation," calling for technical aid from the U.S. and Britain. The rooms were apparently covered with fingerprints, which shouldn't be hard to match, especially with FBI help. But there is much skepticism that the government has the political will or the power to conduct a real investigation, especially since the evidence points to the military.

Many observers fear the slaying of the Jesuits is only the beginning of retaliation against opposition groups. A First Brigade sound truck reportedly boasted, "Ignacio Elacuria and Martin Baro [rector and vice rector] have fallen. We will continue killing communists," on the same day the Jesuits' bodies were found.

"What worries me is to what degree Cristiani is in charge of events," said a Western European diplomat. "The FMLN [offensive] has given the green light to hard-liners in the army to go ahead and do what they have wanted to do for a long time."

Many foreigners have left the country. Spain has cut all aid until the slayings of the Jesuits are satisfactorily investigated. Church leaders have been arrested, gone into hiding or gone abroad. A dusk-to-dawn curfew remains in effect. News is censored, and the country's most prominent evening TV newscast has gone off the air rather than submit to censorship. If the rebels continue the offensive, as many think is likely, army hard-liners will likely become more desperate and less discriminating in their repression.

The U.S. Embassy and the Cristiani government claim that the guerrillas' offensive was defeated—that the people's failure to rise up in an insurrection shows that the rebels have no support. But once again they may be deluding themselves. People are unlikely to join an insurrection unless they think it has a good chance of success. Before this offensive, most people in the capital had never even seen a guerrilla and could hardly be expected to risk their lives for an unknown quantity. Now, however, the rebels have demonstrated their strength. If they make a strong push again, more people may join in. □

Chris Norton is *In These Times'* El Salvador correspondent.

IN THESE TIMES DEC. 6-12, 1989 9

By Diana Johnstone

THE ASSASSINATION OF DEUTSCHE BANK President Alfred Herrhausen, often described as the most powerful man in West Germany, was immediately felt as a political disaster of unforeseeable consequences. Herrhausen embodied both the West German military-industrial complex and West German capitalist takeover of Eastern Europe, starting with East Germany. The November 30 car-bomb killing was

ASSASSINATION

claimed by the Red Army Fraction, the terrorist group that has undergone a complete personnel turnover since it was known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang in the '70s. The early leaders, Andreas Baader, Ulrika Meinhof and others, are all dead. Its current composition is a mystery.

The bloody muddle of the Herrhausen murder injected a volatile dose of suspicion and emotional shock into the midst of the controversy over German reunification, already dangerously overheated and confused.

In a widely noted interview in *Der Spiegel* of November 20, Herrhausen had called for German reunification, just 10 days before Chancellor Helmut Kohl presented his program for step-by-step reunification of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Kohl's plan caused alarm throughout Europe that the FRG is pushing too fast for absorption of the GDR into a powerful German state that would dominate all its neighbors.

Fear and alarm: Herrhausen was not only the aggressive head of West Germany's big-

Herrhausen's car bomb killing rocks German reunification issue

gest bank, the spearhead of German investment and economic penetration of Eastern Europe. As president of the supervisory board of Daimler-Benz, Herrhausen had vigorously pushed through the recent merger of the famous manufacturer of Mercedes Benz cars with the FRG's main aerospace company, Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (MBB). This "elephant marriage," over the original objections of the anti-cartel office, creates the largest industrial group in the FRG with major military contracting interests, raising alarm over reconstitution of the sort of military-industrial complex that backed Hitler's wars of aggression.

In his last *Spiegel* interview, Herrhausen stressed that there could be no mixture of planned economy and market economy, and that the GDR would have to transform into a market economy to welcome Western investment, a process he estimated could take from five to 10 years. Asked about East German fears that if it lets in outside investment, the GDR will be quickly "gobbled up" by West German business, Herrhausen replied: "That view is right only so long as it assumes two states. If there is German reunification, the view is wrong." Nobody objects to investment from one part of West Germany to another, he said.

"I don't know what the GDR population finally wants," said Herrhausen. "I know what I want. I would like the FRG and the GDR to be reunited."

By transforming Herrhausen from an obvi-

ous adversary of the left into a military target, the Red Army Fraction has contributed to militarizing the whole conflict over the future of the GDR. Whoever the killers are, suspicions are certain to persist that they have been manipulated by one secret service or another for obscure reasons.

The military-industrial complex cannot be eliminated by killing one man, however powerful he may seem. The assassination of Herrhausen risks putting the Greens, the Social Democratic left and all opponents of rapid reunification on the defensive. And this, just one year before crucial elections in which all the parties but the Greens seem to feel compelled to compete with the far-right Republicans in demonstrations of national enthusiasm for German reunification.

A reminder: Images drive reasoning from people's minds, and we are in an age of images. Images of happy Germans crossing the Berlin Wall, followed by images of a terrorist car bombing, threaten to drive the more complex reasons based on history out of people's minds.

It is thus necessary to keep repeating the following easily forgotten facts:

• The Soviet Union is not necessarily against German reunification in some less-than-immediate future, but it is totally opposed to a reunified Germany inside NATO. Not all Soviets have forgotten that Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on racial grounds, to bring the "inferior" Slavs under command of the German "master race," and

that the German generals' dispute with Hitler had mainly to do with Hitler's failure to gain the tolerance of the Atlantic powers for this enterprise. In Soviet eyes, a German-dominated NATO can look all too much like the realization of the German generals' ambition to unite the West behind German conquest of the East. Moscow could tolerate an East Germany with a different social and political system, but not an East Germany that would be part of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance.

A Soviet leader who seems to be letting East Germany slip into NATO is almost certain to be overthrown in the name of national security.

• Neither NATO nor reunification is so much the problem as the combination of the two. On the eve of the Malta meeting, Secretary of State James Baker reasserted U.S. insistence that the FRG must remain in NATO no matter what.

• Already last summer, the U.S. ambassador to Bonn, General Vernon Walters, veteran anti-Soviet crusader and global troublemaker, spoke out in favor of German reunification. This seems to grant American carte blanche to German reunification projects, bypassing the rights of the World War II allies to have their say, notably in eventual negotiations for the non-existent peace treaty with Germany. Not by chance, the most hardened U.S. Cold Warriors favor reunification within NATO, which would amount to the "rollback" advocated by such crusaders back in the '50s. It is quite possible to argue from a left position in favor of German reunification on grounds of self-determination. But there are times when defining left positions is of less importance than recognizing the facts of history. □



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By Paul Hockenos

BRASOV, ROMANIA

THE HELICOPTERS BUZZING OVERHEAD AND the legions of military police patrolling the streets were hardly necessary to remind people that exactly two years ago angry workers here ransacked the city hall to protest working conditions and food shortages. Since the now-legendary revolt, Romania's standard of living has dropped even further and opposition to President Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship has mounted at home and abroad.

While popular discontent has forced change even among its former hard-line allies in Eastern Europe, Romania has entrenched itself as a relic of Marxist terror. Rather than compromise with minimal reforms, Ceausescu, the self-proclaimed Conducator, or leader, has responded to an impoverished population and disillusioned party membership with a stepped-up campaign of violence and intimidation.

Residents of Brasov are bracing themselves for their most severe winter yet, as temperatures plunge and snow falls on Transylvania's Carpathian mountains. Ceausescu's policy of exporting agricultural produce to pay off foreign debt ahead of schedule has left nothing but jars of pickled vegetables in shop windows. Despite a yearly agricultural surplus, all basic foodstuffs are strictly rationed.

Although the government allocates every person half a pound of bread a day and nine pounds of potatoes, two pounds of sugar, three pounds of flour and less than a pound of butter or cheese each month, acute shortages prevent many people from receiving even the minimum ration. "Some days there just isn't any bread or cheese," said Juliana, a mother of four from Brasov. "There has been no sugar on our table this year."

Romania's export-oriented industrial policy also diverts gas and electricity from its population. By law, households may use only 40-watt lightbulbs and maintain a room temperature of 53 degrees Fahrenheit. Gas is available only at certain hours.

"Every year we're told to hoard half our fuel for the following year because by then there will be even less," said Rainer, an elementary-school teacher and member of the city's ethnic German minority. "But each year it's half of less and less, and by now it's impossible to save anything at all. Only if it is a mild winter will my coal hold out."

By late afternoon the muddy streets are dark and silent, and the rows of identical, dimly lit, apartment blocks cast a brownish glow over Romania's second-largest city. In restaurants and hotels, customers in winter overcoats huddle over their barely distinguishable meals. Traffic almost disappears completely as car owners try to conserve their five gallons a month of rationed gasoline.

Shortages of medicine and medical facilities have caused infant mortality to skyrocket. While top-quality Romanian pharmaceuticals can be found in Hungarian drug stores, even such basic supplies as aspirin, vitamins and baby food are unavailable to most of the Romanian population. Doctors in the industrial cities of Copsa Mica and Medias in southern Transylvania report that 24 percent of the children born last year had heart problems.

The law of repression: In addition to material deprivations, Romanians live under a regime with the worst human-rights record in Europe: press, travel and speech liberties are non-existent; political dissidents are confined to psychiatric wards; abortion is



Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu: A personality cult worse than Stalin's?

Privation, terror on rise as Ceausescu tightens grip

punishable with a prison sentence. An extensive network of informers and the Securitate, Ceausescu's paramilitary police force, are instructed to root out even the slightest signs of deviation from the ruler's required norms. Since the city hall uprising, a frightened Ceausescu has cracked down even harder,

ROMANIA

imprisoning, harassing and torturing suspected malcontents.

As part of his intimidation campaign, the president has criminalized Romanians' contact with foreigners. "I can tell you with absolute certainty that I will get a visit from the Securitate after your visit," said Rainer, who had already been fined a month's wages for housing a Hungarian friend overnight. "And the longer that you stay, the more questions there will be."

The country's oppressive atmosphere is one key to Ceausescu's tight grip on power. "Terror like in the '50s—executions, mass arrests and so forth—isn't necessary," said a Bucharest architect and longtime party member. "The Securitate is the one thing that functions effectively around here. The entire power structure rests on the security apparatus, and the people are incredibly scared. That's why there is no one on the streets."

Still, opposition to the dictatorship is growing, and the Brasov rebellion indicates just how deep frustration runs. The Nov. 15, 1987, uprising was triggered when thousands of workers from three local truck factories jammed the tiny square around city hall, which also serves as party headquarters, to register their obligatory votes for the city council. Having failed to meet the monthly production quota, paychecks that day had been cut and overtime hours had been demanded of workers to make up the loss.

The workers spontaneously stormed the building yelling, "Death to Ceausescu" and "Down with the party" as they pillaged the offices and burned portraits of the president. By the time police dispersed the riot with

gunfire and tear gas five hours later, the crowd, armed with bottles, knives and iron rods, had swelled to 30,000. Automobiles lay overturned and burned; anti-government graffiti covered public buildings.

Yet despite their "great revolution," as Romanians call it, workers still are not a viable political power. "We have no leader," said a worker from the Red Banner truck factory who participated in the revolt. "Believe me, even the police are sick of the situation. They would even start a palace revolt if they knew how. But nobody does know how."

Dissent from within: Critical voices have recently surfaced within the Communist Party—opposition that could well pose a greater threat to Ceausescu than popular upheaval. Earlier this year, six former top government officials, the backbone of the old guard, published an open letter to Ceausescu, decrying the government's neglect of basic human rights as well as its international isolation. The six proposed an alternative political platform that was clearly informed by Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union. Ceausescu's panicky response—all the signatories were arrested—revealed the ruler's well-justified fear that his support within the ranks of the party is rapidly deteriorating.

In late September, the strongest protest to date came from the previously unknown Front for National Salvation, which attacked the president as the creator of a personality cult worse than Stalin's. "Ceausescu's ousting is perhaps the only way to avoid a major social conflict and bloodshed," stated the group's appeal. The document, which almost

As part of his intimidation campaign, the president has criminalized Romanians' contact with foreigners.

certainly came from within party circles, suggests a growing power struggle that may be the only means of toppling the 71-year-old leader before his death.

Reformers, however, have no easy task ahead. During his 24-year reign, Ceausescu has skillfully consolidated power in the hands of his family and a small circle of cronies. His wife, Elena, is the second in command, and his son, Nicu, has been groomed as his father's heir apparent. In total, 80 relatives hold government positions.

"Romania today is a classic police state," said William Totok, 37, a Romanian refugee. "The power in the country is controlled not by the party but by the secret police, who are directly responsible to the Ceausescu family."

Feast of the faithful: Purge after purge has ensured that only the blindly faithful remain in their official positions. For years Ceausescu has run the government like a personal dynasty, randomly reshuffling Cabinet positions and demoting ministers without explanation only to rehabilitate them a month later. In a pre-emptive strike against possible opposition at the November 20-24 party congress in Bucharest, the president sacked 11 regional ministers November 12 and replaced them with unknown party functionaries.

With the borders closed for the week to foreigners and one member of the Securitate on the streets for every civilian, the 14th party congress seemed to go off without a hitch. In well-rehearsed bursts of adulation during the president's five-hour speech, the 3,000 delegates in the palace hall jumped frequently to their feet, clapping and shouting, "Romania, Communism" and "Ceausescu, heroism." The sole candidate for the top job as usual, Ceausescu was unanimously re-elected.

But the refusal of the Hungarian, Italian and Finnish Communist Parties—as well as the parties from every NATO country but Turkey—to attend the congress underlined the regime's increasing isolation. Throughout Western Europe, dozens of refugee protest groups have accelerated campaigns at a grass-roots level—100,000 demonstrated last year in Hungary—as well as in the United Nations.

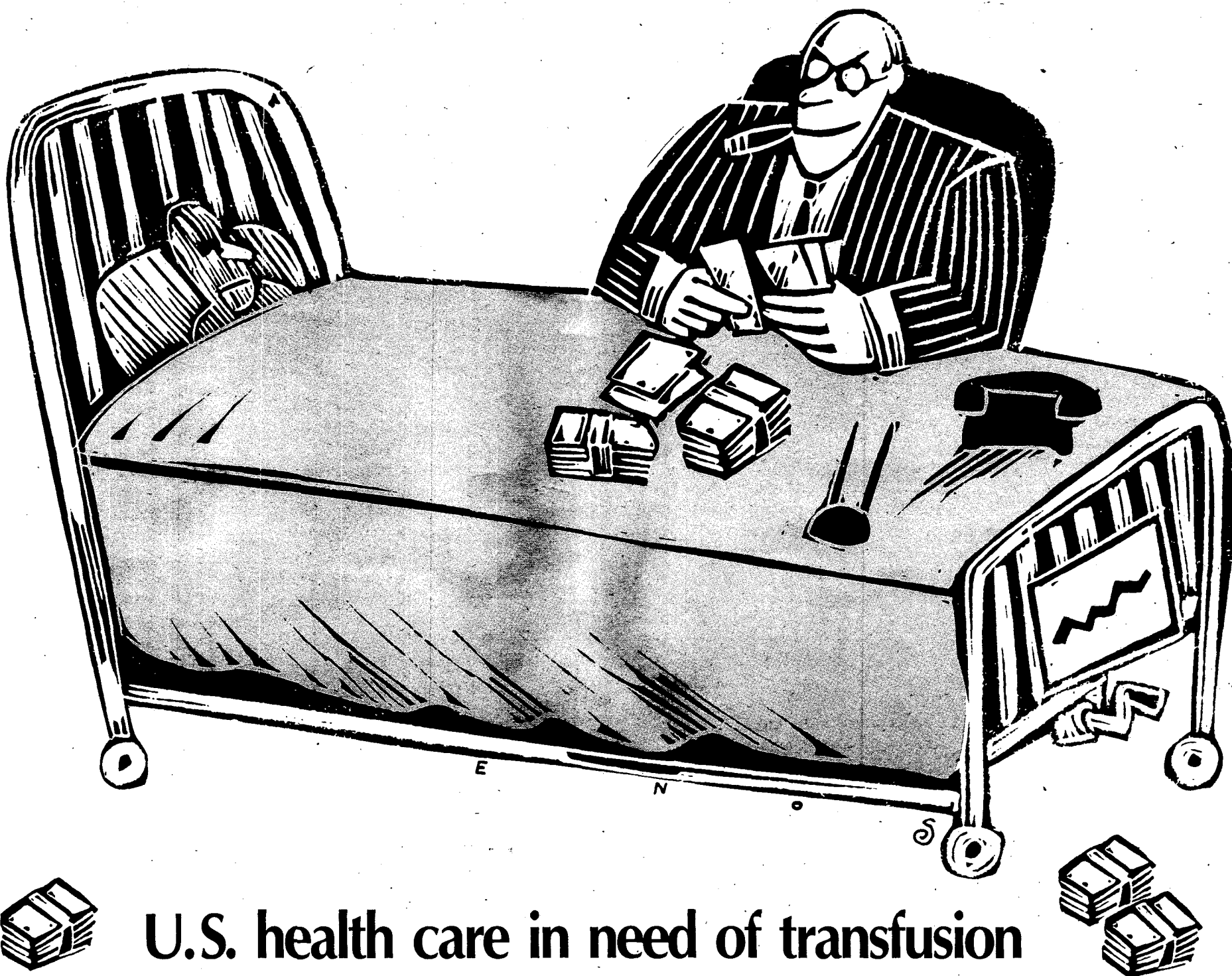
The country's relations with its Eastern European neighbors are at an all-time low. With its once-staunch allies, East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, opening up to reform, Romania has found itself completely on its own. Ceausescu has bitterly denounced Soviet *glasnost* and *perestroika* and has expelled all but the bare minimum of Hungarian diplomats from his country. This summer, after Solidarity's coalition government took power in Poland, he proposed a Warsaw Pact invasion to an unreceptive alliance membership.

Although the West has increased pressure on the regime, it still trades with the country. Transylvanian tomatoes and Moldavian beef in West European supermarkets come straight off the Romanian people's shelves. Calls for an international boycott have gone unanswered.

Until the various opposition forces can crack the Conducator's monopoly on power, the dictator seems bent on driving the country further into ruin. "I want to go out into the street and yell, 'This can't go on,'" said Juliana, "but it does go on, and it gets worse and worse. Sometimes I wonder if our Gorbachev has even been born yet."

Paul Hockenos is a freelance journalist living in Budapest.

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U.S. health care in need of transfusion

By Stephanie Wasserman

AS RESCUERS PULLED ONE ELDERLY WOMAN from the rubble of the recent San Francisco earthquake, TV newscasters covering the event said that although they did not know the extent of the woman's injuries, she seemed in high spirits. From the stretcher she had "joked" about not having health insurance.

While this woman undoubtedly received care regardless of her ability to pay, many other Americans are not as fortunate. At last count 37 million people in the U.S. lacked health insurance—making the number of uninsured Americans greater than the entire population of Canada. Two-thirds of these people are members of families in which at least one person is a full-time employee. While the number of uninsured has risen by 1 million each year since 1980, an estimated 53 million others have inadequate coverage, leaving them vulnerable to catastrophic out-of-pocket health-care expenses.

For these people, the burden of paying for health care remains an overwhelming cause for anxiety—even at times of life-threatening danger. One startling figure suggests that this anxiety is not unfounded. An average of 300,000 uninsured patients are "dumped" each year from private hospitals that are no longer able or willing to assume the cost of uncompensated care. These patients often end up in public emer-

gency rooms, some of them in critical condition from ailments or injuries they left untreated. In an era in which public hospitals are increasingly more difficult to find and cost-containment measures in all hospitals encourage the early release of even paying patients, patient dumping represents one of many alarming trends that have resulted from a profit-dependent health-care system.

A profit a day: Measuring the success of health care in terms of bottom-line figures rather than the delivery of services has encouraged some doctors to perform expensive, often unnecessary procedures. It also has encouraged spending on health-care advertising, as well as the construction of new hospitals or wings in areas where the demand for services has already been met. At the same time, access to care for the majority of the population has decreased, adversely affecting the national health status. The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in 1985, 37 percent of all deaths in the U.S. were caused by heart disease—a condition that is widely considered to be preventable.

This trend of decreasing health-care access is particularly important to the U.S. workforce, where workers traditionally have relied on employer-based coverage for health insurance. In 1983 alone, U.S. corporations spent more than \$89 billion on employee health benefits, making them a major cost of production. Chrysler Chair-

man Lee Iacocca, for example, claims that health benefits for Chrysler employees, retirees and their families comprise more than \$700 of the cost of producing a car in the U.S. Yet in Canada, where citizens enjoy the benefits of a national health-insurance program, that cost is only \$223. In response to rising costs, employers in the U.S. have increasingly restructured health-insurance benefits to shift greater financial burden onto employees in the form of higher deductibles, greater out-of-pocket expenses, less coverage or lower wages.

The burden of paying for health care remains an overwhelming cause of anxiety for many Americans even at times of life-threatening danger.

The strikes by the United Mine Workers against the Pittston Coal Group and the Communication Workers of America against AT&T are just two recent responses to cutbacks in health benefits.

According to Tony Mazzochi, secretary-treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), "All major labor negotiations are dealing with health care as a primary problem."

OCAW, long at the forefront of health and safety advocacy, recently joined forces with the newly formed Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) to support a "cradle to grave" national health-insurance program in the U.S. OCAW could have thrown its weight behind any of several existing health-care reform proposals, but Mazzochi says the union is backing the PNHP plan because it is the only one that attempts fundamental change.

Although details of the PNHP proposal have yet to be worked out, coverage would be universal and comprehensive and would include all in- and out-patient care with unrestricted choice of providers, clinics and hospitals. A board of experts and community representatives would determine which services would be unnecessary. All out-of-pocket expenses, including co-payments or deductibles, would be eliminated.

Advocates of the PNHP plan point north to Canada for their role model. The Canadian government offers free, comprehensive health care to all its citizens, regardless

of sex, race, creed, employment status or income. And despite the fact that the U.S. spends a greater percentage of its gross national product (GNP) on health care than Canada, Canadians are not only more satisfied with their health-care system, they also appear to be healthier.

In 1986 the U.S. spent 10.9 percent of its GNP on health care; Canada spent only 8.6 percent. In 1984 the U.S. infant-mortality rate ranked 18th among 142 nations around the world. In U.S. inner cities the rate is comparable to that of many developing nations. Canada that year ranked eighth. According to a Harris poll published last February, only 3 percent of the Canadians surveyed said they would like a health-care system similar to the one in the U.S. Sixty-one percent of the Americans, however, said they wanted a system similar to the one in Canada.

Winds of change: The more than 2,000 members of the PNHP represent an important progressive sector of a profession traditionally anathema to any attempt at reform in the health-care system. This progressive element may hail the beginning of a new approach to medicine as costs increase and widespread public access decreases. Pervasive changes in the system have ended the reign of the American Medical Association (AMA) as a powerful organization able to dictate the form and content of the practice of medicine in the U.S. The AMA now claims a membership comprised of 42 percent of all physicians. In the '30s, 67 percent of all physicians were members of the AMA. But the benefits conferred from an organization supporting the activities of the private practitioner are no longer relevant as doctors turn to salaried positions with the rise of health maintenance organizations (HMOs).

Moreover, the current defensive practice of medicine, which requires detailed oversight by insurance companies and local peer-review panels of all clinical practice has inundated practitioners with growing administrative burdens. In fact, the Canadian system of guaranteeing fee-for-service payments through binding fee schedules negotiated between medical societies and provincial governments appears to be an attractive means of eliminating bureaucratic interference and getting on with the practice of medicine. Fifty-six percent of the doctors who responded to a survey by two researchers from Columbia University and the American Foundation for the Blind said they support nationalized health care, although of these, 75 percent believed most of their colleagues would disapprove.

A better plan: PNHP has, for several reasons, advanced the idea of free universal coverage over a proposal by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) that would require employers to provide health insurance to all full-time workers and their dependents. According to PNHP member Cecile Rose, the Kennedy bill and other similar proposals "create two classes of care—one for the employed and one for the unemployed." Rose says such proposals will likely result in differences in quality of care. Also, employer-based insurance does not address the administrative problems that plague our current system. Rose estimates that "\$50 billion per year [in administrative costs] could be saved" by eliminating insurance companies and streamlining the payment system. Furthermore, out-of-pocket expenses can function as barriers to access. A broad range of studies

suggest that, at least for hospitalization, co-payments discourage necessary care, especially among the poor.

Under the PNHP plan, hospitals would be reimbursed for operating expenses on an annual lump-sum basis and would be prohibited from making profits or restricting services. Moreover, payments for capital costs would be separated from hospital operating costs and physician fees. According to the PNHP, hospitals under the current system have strong incentive to restrict services because equipment and buildings can be purchased with surplus funds from yearly operating budgets. By isolating capital costs from operating costs, rational resource allocation would be ensured through regional planning. This mechanism would likely eliminate current inequities in resources that allow 3000,000 hospital beds across the nation to lie empty each day.

Finally, the PNHP program would be administered by a public agency, and funds would be channeled through a single-payer system. The 1,550 private insurance companies currently responsible for administering much of this nation's health care consume about 8 percent of their revenue in administrative costs. The Canadian government, on the other hand, spends only 3 percent of the revenues for its national health program on overhead.

Details of the funding structure for a national health-insurance program in the U.S. have not been worked out, but PNHP has suggested a basic framework. Funds could initially come from current federal allocations for Medicaid and Medicare as well as

current state and local funds for health care. Employer contributions could be obtained by taxing them an amount equal to the amount they paid the previous year for employee health benefits.

Education for change: OCAW is now mounting a comprehensive educational campaign to inform local members of the PNHP proposal. The issue of nationalized health care was presented at September's national bargaining conference in Denver, and union officials say the PNHP proposal will be addressed at every council meeting across the country over the next year. This month OCAW's northeast district, its largest, plans to transport a busload of its members to Hamilton, Ontario, to visit Canadian health-care institutions.

While other unions have recognized the importance of addressing the problem of health care, OCAW is the only union to take a stance on a specific remedy. But OCAW is not interested in relating the problem to its membership alone. Mazochi says he sees organized labor as a "social movement." He says he hopes OCAW will play "a special role in making health-care reform a public issue." The union plans to declare a national mobilization week next April, during which 1 million leaflets will be distributed describing the nature of the U.S. health-care crisis and the proposed solution. OCAW members say they hope this grass-roots organizing will culminate in a concerted legislative effort to restructure the U.S. health-care system.

Proponents of a Canadian-style health-care system in the U.S. recognize many of

Canada's shortcomings. The inflationary nature of fee-for-services reimbursement has put strains on the health-care budget by encouraging excessive interventions. In response, the Canadian government has limited the total monies available for physician fees. Some provinces have raised the ire of medical communities by actually limiting physician incomes—although they remain comfortably high. Other Canadian providers are frustrated with constraints on capital spending that can discourage the purchase of new high-tech equipment. Canada's system also has failed to evenly distribute health-care personnel throughout the country, with most Canadian physicians preferring to practice in metropolitan rather than rural areas. And finally, while preventive care is available in Canada, it has not been systematically encouraged.

Despite these weaknesses, advocates of the PNHP proposal believe that a comprehensive and publicly mandated national health-care system remains the only viable solution to health-care problems in the U.S. These advocates do not represent a minority voice. Seventy-three percent of the respondents in a 1984 ABC/Washington Post survey said they supported a nationalized health-care system in the U.S. While vehement opposition is expected from some, one need only remember the acerbic debates about Medicare in the '60s and HMOs in the '70s to realize that the specter of the evils of "socialized" medicine can similarly be put to rest. □

Stephanie Wasserman is a researcher on occupational health and safety in Denver.



A dose of American ingenuity

By Michael Gray

LONDON

BECAUSE NEARLY EVERY CITIZEN IN EUROPE'S 12-nation economic community is covered by national health insurance, the popular myth about the U.S. is that the streets outside hospitals are lined with the poor and dying who have no insurance and cannot afford to pay the bills.

But as medical costs rise worldwide and as Europe's growing elderly community begins distorting demographic curves, the governments are scrambling for ways to contain costs while maintaining their principles of socialized medicine.

When Britain's National Health Service (NHS) turned 40 last year, no one doubted that it needed some adjustment. Serving a nation of nearly 60 million with an organizational structure dating back to 1948 and hospital buildings to 100 years before that, there were bound to be some problems.

The signs were everywhere: waiting lists for non-critical operations were around 700,000 and climbing; 15 percent of the population was more than 65 years old; a massive cash injection of \$1.8 billion in 1987 was swallowed whole, without so much as an appreciative belch. The money was immediately claimed by back-salary awards and inflation. Nurses were striking, and many elderly people were not lasting the two-year wait for hip replacement in some parts of the country. Still, Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke's proposed reforms are not the lump-sum solution previous governments had used to

temporarily placate the omnivorous institution.

Clarke decided his lethargic system needed a dose of Yankee competition. In his highly ambitious timetable, Clarke has proposed applying some American-style health-management practices to some of the more monolithic parts of the NHS. Prior unmentionables like internal competition would be introduced among hospitals and large family practices; doctors would be put on budgets; medical audits, similar to peer review in the U.S., would be increased and strengthened. And an increased private-sector role in health-care delivery has been encouraged. The intention of the reforms is to force an already brutally efficient health service to become even more so by pushing cost-vs.-treatment decisions out of government offices and down to the local level, all the way to family doctors.

But the much-loved NHS, with its one million employees, is not going to be dismantled in favor of private insurance, and patients won't have to start paying doctors

When Britain's National Health Service turned 40 last year, no one doubted that it needed some adjustment.

or anything as capitalistic as that. The founding principles will remain the same. With minor exceptions, the service will be free and its \$45 billion annual budget will continue to be funded out of the general revenue pool.

In the U.S., about \$265 billion—11 percent of the gross national product (GNP)—is spent annually on health care. This is about \$1,100 per capita, and 40 percent of it is public money. In Canada, spending is just over \$800 per capita at about 8 percent of the GNP. The NHS treats nearly an entire nation of 60 million people for about \$45 billion a year, or 6 percent of its GNP. And judging from two general health yardsticks, the nation is just as healthy as the U.S.—life expectancy is nearly identical and infant mortality is slightly lower. Canada tops both countries in these categories.

Basically, the British cradle-to-grave cliché still holds true. Only about 10 percent of the country holds private health insurance. But as NHS hospitals grow more crowded, private industry is increasingly offering it as a perk to senior employees. At birth everyone is given an NHS number entitling him or her to free health service. And no matter where they live or move, residents are automatically assigned to local general practitioners.

The state owns about 2,000 hospitals around the country, although the number of private ones is growing, especially in the London area.

For American comparative purposes, imagine the U.S. public-school system. General taxes support the education system;

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL



L.A. Times Syndicate

Bush administration is desperately caught up in its own old thinking

There is a striking divergence between recent events in Eastern Europe and those in El Salvador. In the one case, what Jeanne Kirkpatrick used to be fond of calling totalitarian governments incapable of changing peacefully have been doing just that in response to overwhelming popular pressure from their citizens—and doing it with dizzying speed. But in the other case, what Kirkpatrick would call a democratically elected government has been barbarously murdering its citizens in the vain hope of putting an end to a decade-long civil war against a cruel and vicious ruling class.

The difference between the ways in which the rulers of Eastern Europe and El Salvador have been defending their privileges and power against long-suffering populations is so glaring that one would expect American journalists and liberal politicians to comment on it. But all we've heard is a deafening silence, accompanied by lame—and lame-brained—attempts to paint the guerrillas in El Salvador as terrorists and part of a no-longer-credible Communist conspiracy.

The Bush administration's fatuous rhetoric reflects a desperate inability to understand what is happening and an obstinate unwillingness to come to terms with reality. President Bush told a group of fifth-graders in Chicago Thanksgiving week: "My pitch is this—that we must not pull away from a freely democratically elected government that had certification of the freedom of these elections. And to continue to have a handful of countries ... supporting the outdated concept of Marxist guerrillas is unacceptable to the United States; and I must tell the Congress of the United States that I will not accept as president a cutoff of aid to El Salvador."

Pressed by reporters about whether he believed Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani's assurance that his government was not involved in the brutal assassination of six Jesuit priests, their cook and her 15-year-old daughter, Bush replied that of course he did. "Cristiani would not lie to me on a matter of this nature," he said, leaving us to wonder whether the matter was too trivial to bother lying about or whether Cristiani only tells Bush little white lies.

Meanwhile, Bush spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, blaming the Soviet Union for the introduction of anti-aircraft missiles into El Salvador, said this was "an example of old thinking," and that they should cease "this outrageous behavior." Yet the same day other unnamed administration officials admitted that they doubt the Soviets have been involved in the arms shipments. And they insisted that the Soviets stop sending weapons to the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua even though they had no intention to stop sending arms to rebels involved in the civil war in Afghanistan.

Old thinking certainly is a problem. It pervades the statements and actions of the administration, which last week plaintively asked the Soviets, "Why do you continue to stick your finger in our eye in Central America?" Can anyone in Washington or in the media really still believe that the civil war in El Salvador is a Soviet plot and that it would end if the Russians stopped arms shipments to the revolutionary governments in the region? Or that the Salvadoran government is a democracy, or anything but a front for the army and

death-squad leader Roberto d'Aubuisson? If so, they are certainly victims of old thinking.

A prime example of old thinking occurred on the McNeil-Lehrer show the day after the Salvadoran army massacred the priests and women. In their usual lineup of three neo-Nazis and one neoliberal, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) represented the liberals. He was, of course, outraged by the murders. But when asked if he would favor cutting off the military aid that keeps the death squads in working order, he replied, no, he knew Cristiani personally and he's a fine, honest man. Cristiani assured Dodd that his government could not be involved in such a thing, Dodd said, and he must be given a chance to solve this mystery. Neville Chamberlain beat Dodd to this kind of thinking by 51 years when he came back from Munich and assured the world that he had gotten Mr. Hitler's personal word that Czechoslovakia was all he wanted. He knew Hitler personally, Chamberlain said. He was a fine man who would give us "peace in our time."

Of course, there is a difference. Cristiani is not Hitler. Hitler was his own boss. Cristiani fronts for d'Aubuisson. Even so, Dodd's thinking was old—very old—and more than a little dishonest.

A lone voice of sanity in a sea of dissemblers

Americas Watch has been just about the only prominent voice to tell the truth about the Bush administration's role in protecting the Salvadoran butchers. In a report issued last week, the New York-based human-rights organization accused American officials of distorting evidence of Salvadoran government responsibility for the recent massacres of civilians and religious leaders. "The urban offensive of November 1989," the report says, "has put the administration once again in the awkward position of defending the indefensible." Before and after the offensive, the report asserts, the United States must hold President Cristiani responsible for the "unspeakable abuses" of his armed forces.

"If he is in fact powerless to exert any meaningful control over [the armed forces]," the report says, "then the Bush administration's fiction that the U.S. supports a legitimate government is really no more than a thin veil to cover up its support of a murderous military."

The report notes that American policy makers responded dismally to the killing of the six Jesuits. "Every statement by the Bush administration and its congressional allies," Americas Watch charges, "also includes shameful attempts to disguise or to ignore the overwhelming evidence that the armed forces of El Salvador were either responsible directly for the crime or deliberately and coldly made it happen."

Nor was this an isolated event, the report notes. "The political space opened up [in El Salvador] since the August 1987 signing of the Central American peace plan, which allowed the return to El Salvador of prominent politicians, has slammed shut, as those same politicians have been forced into exile or hiding by death threats."

In short, we see in El Salvador the acting out of the old ideas of brutal colonialism and suppression of the poor and working people by an oligarchy of the super-rich and their military henchmen. And we see the Bush administration doing everything it can to maintain these people in power. Indeed, it's time for some new thinking in Washington.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

From: Director, CIA To: All covert agents

HEREWITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING assassinations:

Should you receive an invitation from the Bush administration soliciting participation in a planned assassination, Just say No.

Unless, of course, the note should state the designated head of state will be the victim of a plot, the plans for which include you not.

In that event, pursue the coup just so the blame falls not on you. Don't emerge as instrumental unless the death is accidental.

Any questions?

Ruth D. Langston
Bastrop, Texas

In politics, red and green don't make brown

IT WAS GREAT TO READ ABOUT FORMER ALDERMAN Ben Nichols "red-green coalition" election victory in Ithaca (ITT, Sept. 20). But please don't color it "brown." Here in West Germany there are red (Social Democrat) and green (Green Party, or "Alternative List") coalitions in the city halls of Berlin and Frankfurt. Historic firsts. They should not be confused with the brown traditional color of Nazis and neo-Nazis. Besides, recognizing both red and green and their contributions is important. The integrity of a coalition's members is often as vital to success as overall unity.

Anna Gyorgy
Bonn, West Germany

Volunteers?

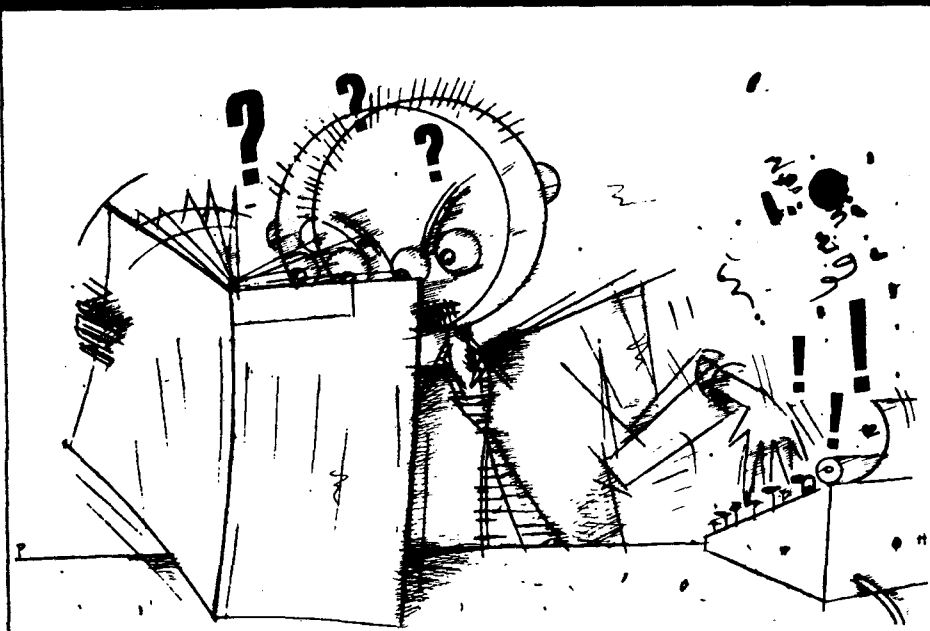
THAT GUY IN YOUR 13TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE (ITT, Nov. 1) was right—40,000 readers is a shame! For a "socialist" newspaper, you are not very socialist! America is ready to read the truth, and it's up to you bozos to reach that market. You need volunteers badly. Newspaper boys and girls to hit the streets hard, canvassing for new readership. There should be a newspaper person on every corner in Chicago and in every shopping center (especially on Saturday mornings) in the suburbs. No one I know has even heard of you; no newspaper stand or store I know carries *In These Times*. How do you expect to prosper when no one even knows you're there? If you want my donation to this paper, you'd better start acting like a socialist newspaper and make a small attempt at reaching the people.

Robert Siegel
Des Plaines, Ill.

What you mean "we"?

IF SALIM MUWAKKIL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE VALUE system of low-income black males is accurate (ITT, Nov. 8), then the African-American community faces a crisis of historic proportions.

A peer culture that rewards young people for "academic failure" is a strikingly new development in African-American history. During slavery, many blacks risked sale and



torture to acquire literacy and transmit it to their peers. Reading was highly prized in the slave community and was viewed as a symbol of power and liberty. When slavery ended, blacks of all ages poured into schools and were responsible for founding the South's first tax-supported public school systems.

These values persisted into the 20th century. Many of the epic battles of the civil-rights movement—in the courts as well as the streets—were fought over access to educational opportunity.

To now learn that a sizable segment of black youth harasses, intimidates and assaults other blacks who want to pursue an education is horrifying.

No matter what the causes of this behavior, it must be attacked head-on by every black institution. By the dawn of the 20th century, the majority of jobs in the U.S. economy will require some college education. If blacks opt out of the quest for educational achievement, they will be permanently mired at the bottom of the American economy.

It is time that political activists begin organizing to uproot the "outlaw culture" that is gaining hegemony among lower-class black youth. We have to go to the street corners, schoolyards and hallways where young people congregate and draw them into discussions about where their lives are heading. We have to frankly discuss with them the implications of their actions for the neighborhoods they live in. We have to give them a sense of history and a pride in their origins. And we have to create youth organizations that provide other outlets for their energy and rebelliousness. To allow their current values to go unchallenged in the name of "cultural autonomy" is disastrous.

Mark Naison
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Abortion pill

RU486 PROBABLY IS, AS KATHARINE GREIDER writes (ITT, Nov. 8), the greatest scientific breakthrough in fertility control in two decades; however, the drug seems to hold more hope as a "morning after" pill than as an abortifacient.

A close look at the medical studies reveals that mifepristone (the generic name for this steroid) used alone as an early abortifacient has only a moderate rate of inducing a complete abortion: from 61 percent to 83 percent, which is far below the rate of 97 percent for surgical abortion. Mifepristone used in combination with prostaglandins does equal the success rates of surgical abortion. However, prostaglandins must be kept refrigerated from point of manufacture to point of use; this necessary cold chain makes it difficult to maintain chemistry stability in less developed countries where refrigeration is nearly non-existent.

There is only one researcher in the U.S. who is conducting government-approved testing of RU486 alone as an abortifacient. He claims good success with a large single dose of the drug.

It is doubtful that RU486 will be cheaper in this country than the current average cost of surgical abortion: \$230. The cost of the drug plus the cost of two or three visits to a physician's office is likely to cost as much as surgical abortion.

Most media people rely on press releases from the population-control groups (Planned Parenthood, Zero Population Growth, Population Council) for their information on RU486. Such organizations have a mission different from that of the feminist women's health movement. Population-control groups are interested in just about all fertility-control drugs and devices that can easily be distributed to women. Groups like the International Women's Health Coalition,

on the other hand, are concerned with the long-term health of individual women and the effects on them of drugs and devices embraced cavalierly by the population-control establishment.

Responsible feminists agree that continued research and development of RU486 is absolutely essential to the progress of fertility control—both as a birth-control pill and as medical abortion. And women should have the options of surgical or medical abortion. But RU486 is not yet ready for widespread use, much less unsupervised black-market distribution.

If Greider had researched further, she would have found that the U.S. anti-choice groups have attempted to block research and development of the drug through such legislative means as the Tauke Amendment and an amendment to a Federal Drug Administration appropriations bill. The only boycott the anti-choice groups have suggested is of French wine.

Sharon Lieberman
Evanston, Ill.

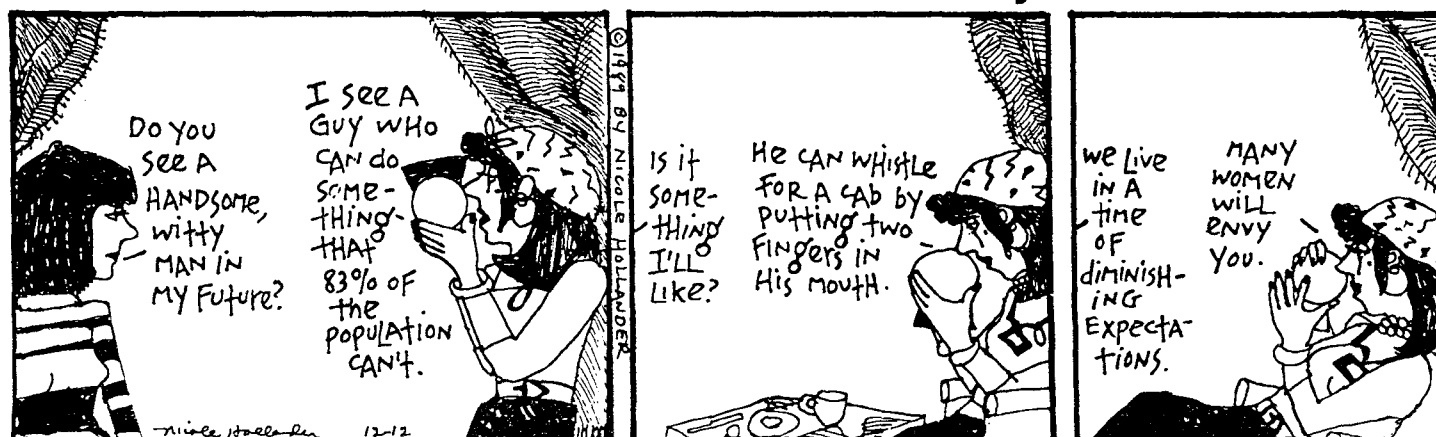
Katharine Greider replies: Sharon Lieberman makes an important point in calling attention to the different, sometimes conflicting agendas of feminist and family planning groups in the area of birth-control development. Both groups intend to promote the interests of women. "Population-control groups," as Lieberman calls them, emphasize the burden on women of unwanted pregnancy and seek primarily to eliminate it. Feminist groups correctly object to the use of women's bodies as testing grounds for drugs or devices embraced by institutions in the name of fertility control. In the long run, women are well-served by the tension between these two advocacy groups.

Lieberman's claim that RU486 holds more hope as a morning-after pill than as an abortifacient is premature. Research on this potential use of the drug is in a very early stage. Sheldon Segal, director of population sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation and one of the country's foremost experts on RU486, says he believes that the drug will ultimately prove more useful and effective as an abortifacient than as a morning-after pill.

It is true that anti-abortion groups seek to block the availability of RU486 in the U.S. through political lobbying as well as the threat of economic boycott. Still, pharmaceutical companies, even in the absence of legislative impediments, will probably be reluctant to market the drug in the U.S. for fear of financial repercussions. Ironically, the threat of potential lawsuits by RU486 users is probably a greater disincentive to pharmaceutical companies than any of the pressures applied by anti-abortion groups.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



By Mike Layton

THROUGHOUT THE '80S, IF YOU ASKED SALVADORANS who was in charge of their country they would promptly reply: first, the U.S. Embassy; second, the Salvadoran army; and, as an afterthought, whoever was president.

Whether the killing last month of six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter in San Salvador will at last galvanize the U.S. Congress into demanding an accounting of the conduct of our "other" war in Central America is, of course, an open question. Congressional indignation is hot, but it's been heated by past events and still the killing goes on.

Congressional dismay at the slayings of the priests appears disingenuous. No similar expressions of outrage followed the killings a month earlier of 10 labor leaders while peace negotiations were underway between the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Your tax dollars at work: Over the past eight years the U.S. has poured more than \$4 billion into El Salvador in the name of financing a democracy or, from the standpoint of Ronald Reagan and now George Bush, a proxy war to hold back the communist hordes gathering in our own backyard.

Those American taxpayer dollars have created a hollow army of some 60,000 men, good at skinning people alive and carving out tongues but with little stomach for face-to-face combat. The money also finances a

War for your money: the U.S. in El Salvador

lavish lifestyle for members of El Salvador's oligarchy who enjoy some of the finest homes in the world, as well as expensive European cars, classy restaurants and the loudest all-night discos north of Rio de Janeiro. The recent insurrection is the first time most of those people, or their sons, have directly experienced the war that has raged in the countryside and the slums for eight years.

As the weekend talk-show and newspaper pundits pondered the guerrillas' motives in launching their battle in the capital, some hinted broadly that guerrillas in army disguise had killed the priests to provoke the wrath of the *Norte Americanos*. Few of the TV intelligentsia pointed out that the Salvadoran army runs the country, subject to some minor directives from the U.S. Embassy, and that the army exists, first, to enrich its officers and, second, to repress the country's own citizens whenever they protest the near-slavery conditions in which many exist.

Also neglected in the lofty pontifications was the reason for the breakdown in the recent peace negotiations—the murders of the labor leaders. The real significance of the talks, however, was that the army never participated in them.

Most of the punditry concerned peripheral matters. Where did the guerrillas get their weapons, their ammunition, their training, their inspiration? The usual answer is that it all came from Cuba (or the Soviet Union) via Nicaragua. Yet in eight years of war, the U.S. has never yet produced proof of charges that Nicaragua is a major FMLN supplier. It's important to remember that the U.S. contra war against Nicaragua was sold to Congress on the basis of the need to interdict arms shipments to El Salvador from Nicaragua.

Recently, of course, the U.S. State Department has ignored stories, arguably more legitimate than the cops'n'robbers gun-running charge against Nicaragua, that the beaten contras are selling their weapons to the Salvadoran guerrillas. The guerrillas themselves have boasted of seizing, and

even buying, weapons from the Salvadoran army.

Some of the TV commentators expressed surprise that the guerrillas had the men and organization to wage such a fight. But as recipients of confidential State Department information, they should know by now that the FMLN, which heads up the most experienced and arguably the best-trained guerrilla force in the world, is fighting a corrupt, inept and reluctant army of conscripts

American taxpayer dollars in El Salvador have created a hollow army of some 60,000 men good at skinning people alive and cutting out tongues, but with little stomach for face-to-face combat.

whose backbones are stiffened by U.S. military advisers and ever-increasing numbers of high-tech weapons.

The Salvadoran army, on the other hand, is reluctant to engage a determined enemy. U.S. military advisers are aware of this and, most likely, so is the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador. But past experience shows that reporting such disquieting information back to Washington can get an ambassador banished to Kuwait.

Business as usual: The murders of the priests and two civilians, just the latest atrocity in a war more prone to gratuitous violence than most, has brought the usual promises to find the culprits and "deal with them severely." Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson, who has taken Elliott Abrams' place as the chief apologist for U.S. third-party Latin crimes, puts his trust in Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani.

For years the State Department put its trust in former President Jose Napoleon Duarte to

curb abuses against his own people. But his government never stopped the killings, even after Duarte publicly accused Roberto d'Aubuisson, the founder and actual head of Cristiani's ARENA Party, of ordering the 1980 murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero. D'Aubuisson continues to broadcast the names of those he calls "subversives," de facto orders to the death squads.

Romero's murder as he said Mass outraged those who previously had paid scant attention to what was happening in that obscure little country. Worldwide indignation carried over into U.S. interference with other Central American countries and probably prevented Reagan from ordering an American invasion of Nicaragua.

Slaughtering women, old men and children no longer excites indignation in this jaded world, but killing priests arouses even non-religious types. Thus Romero's assassination was a big mistake, as was the rape and slaying of four U.S. Catholic women the same year, although that atrocity was probably a drunken freelance job rather than a death-squad operation. Nevertheless, it illustrated an open season of oppression of religious people by the oligarchy and the army.

A little help from their friends: Civilian support for the FMLN is stronger than support for the army, which is widely feared by people in every sector of that society. Anyone who has visited the country for more than a few days notices that when Salvadorans are confident that they won't be heard by spies, they denounce the army and, usually, the government in the same breath. Many citizens who won't actively stick their necks out choose to help the guerrillas in small ways. During the recent insurrection, many San Salvador residents dug trenches for the guerrillas and offered tactical information.

Then why did a majority of them vote for the ARENA Party last March, in an election as fair as can be expected in a country caught up in the turmoil of continuing war? The chief reason was that the Christian Democrats, under Duarte, had proven themselves not only corrupt but also incapable of governing. That was partly because the army was either outrightly hostile or aloofly contemptuous of Duarte and his government. If ARENA was promising peace and was calling the tune anyhow, many Salvadorans reasoned, what did they have to lose? ARENA jus. might even keep its promises.

But to the surprise of few, it hasn't kept them. Brutalities had stepped up even before the presidential election in anticipation of ARENA's victory, and they've grown worse since. Peasant group leaders who recently returned from refugee camps in Honduras have been kidnapped, tortured and killed.

The end of the recent insurrection, however, doesn't mean that the war is over. Someone is going to have to tell the army and ARENA to curb its killers. The only force capable of doing that is the U.S. Congress. But it needs to accept a dose of reality. A good start would be to grill long-ignored State Department and military experts who know the truth and then explain, emphatically, to Cristiani and the Salvadoran army that the fountain of aid will quickly run dry unless reforms are enacted.

Mike Layton, a journalist who has traveled to El Salvador frequently in the past decade, is currently writing a book on Central America.

HOW DEEP IS DEEP ECOLOGY?

WITH AN ESSAY REVIEW ON WOMAN'S FREEDOM
GEORGE BRADFORD

An activist thinker stresses the need for radical social change, in the debate over Deep Ecology.

"[Bradford] says . . . it is not only out-of-control technology but unfettered capital and an unfeeling state that are destroying planetary ecosystems."

— Wilbur Wood, *Voice Literary Supplement*

" . . . brings together seemingly disparate issues of hunger, warfare, capitalist exploitation, neo-Malthusianism, gender imbalance, corporate destruction of wildlife and wilderness, and anthropocentrism to point out that a truly deep, deep ecology needs to look a little closer to home than the nearest endangered rainforest . . ."

— Bookpaper (Berkeley)

" . . . [Bradford's] thinking is cogent and pertinent . . ."

— Small Press Book Review

" . . . Thoughtful comments on women's liberation . . ."

— The Book Reader

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By James Weinstein

EVER SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee in 1972—and its subsequent conversion to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) following a merger with the New American Movement in 1982—the organization was dominated by Michael Harrington. His speeches, books and personal relationships with leading trade unionists and liberal politicians gave DSA its public identity, as well as its direction.

In the late '70s and early '80s, DSA had as many as 7,500 members and chapters in dozens of cities—each of which had its own orientation and character—but as a national organization it sometimes seemed to exist primarily to showcase Harrington. In a sense, DSA was really two organizations, one a collection of local chapters, the other a national office in New York that concentrated on the projects in which Harrington was involved.

Harrington's death from cancer last July 31 was, therefore, a traumatic event for DSA, even though it had been anticipated for the past two years. What would happen now to DSA, many people wondered. Could it survive the absence of its founder, intellectual guide and inspirational leader?

These questions were on everybody's mind when more than 200 delegates and observers met November 9-11 outside of Baltimore for DSA's 1989 national convention. These uncertainties were exacerbated, as Irving Howe made clear in his speech to the delegates, by the fact that the swing to the right of the '80s, followed by the cataclysmic political changes now in progress in Eastern Europe, have brought the idea of socialism into worldwide disrepute just at the time that DSA has lost its pre-eminent political thinker.

It's the idea and vision of socialism that is most in trouble, Howe said, but Harrington's death has left the organization with a group of leaders unable—or not yet able—to provide the political intellectual guidance now needed to revitalize the idea or the vision. "There never would have been a right time" for Harrington to die, "but now is an especially wrong time," Howe said. "He left an uncertain legacy. His talents were so enormous and his energy and devotion so great that he tended to dwarf everyone around him."

And in so doing he left a cadre of people "some of them very talented, but in a way also stunted by the relationship they had to Mike Harrington." At present, Howe argued, this cadre is "hesitant, insufficiently ambitious—they don't make big mistakes—inadequately learned and geared excessively to organizational routine."

And yet, despite Howe's understandably gloomy view of the organization and its current leaders, the convention was not marked by pessimism, much less despair. Although recognizing the difficulties that lie ahead, most speakers expressed confidence that possibilities existed for organizational growth and increased political influence.

The world scene: DSA members, of course, see the recent events in Eastern Europe as a validation of their faith in democratic socialism, as well as their opposition to the idea of a one-party state. As DSA Vice Chair Bogdan Denitch put it, the collapse of one Communist government after

Democratic Socialists look ahead



Founder Michael Harrington's death in July leaves the DSA at a crossroads in its development.

another in the face of massive popular discontent gives socialism a "second shot" in Eastern Europe and a psychological boost in the rest of the world. "Even Communist reformers are now saying that there cannot be socialism without democracy," Denitch said, adding that ultimately neither can there be democracy without socialism.

While it remains unclear where the reforms in Eastern Europe will lead, Denitch was optimistic about the possibilities for the emergence of democratic forms of socialism. He also saw opportunities for the left to advance its social programs now that the Cold War and the arms race are coming to an end.

Similarly, many speakers were encouraged by the results of the November elections, both because of the victories of Douglas Wilder in Virginia, David Dinkins in New York City and other black mayoral candidates in Seattle and New Haven, Conn., and because of popular support for pro-choice candidates wherever abortion was made an issue by Democrats. Much was made of the fact that Dinkins is a DSA member, though as theologian Cornel West said in one of his speeches to the convention, "Some of us will be praying intensely for Mr. Dinkins," who has "symbolic significance to an African-American community that he cannot possibly deliver on." Even so, West said, "that doesn't mean he won't make a difference—he's much better than Giuliani [his Republican opponent]."

Then, too, there was celebration over the election of Ben Nichols as mayor of Ithaca, N.Y. Nichols, a longtime socialist, ran as a candidate of his DSA chapter. His DSA membership, unlike that of Dinkins and others like president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Harry Britt and Reps. Ron Dellums (D-CA) and Major Owens (D-NY), is more than nominal. His election resulted from the activities of the local chapter.

The difference in the membership of people like Dinkins and Nichols symbolizes the distance between the national organization and its local chapters. Under Harrington, the national organization concentrated on attracting prominent politicians and trade unionists and on participating in national events and coalitions. This was important in that it gave DSA a degree of national pres-

ence. But it did little or nothing to translate DSA's vision and principles into programs or activities. Nor was DSA able significantly to influence the politics of the coalitions in which it participated. On the issue of national health, for example, DSA's concern about maintaining good relations with Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) has tended to mute support for a national health service that would go beyond what Kennedy proposes.

Meanwhile, the locals were left to their own devices. Over the years a few have developed programs or successfully run people for local office, but most have floundered. Some rank-and-file convention delegates expressed frustration on this issue, though most of those who felt most strongly about it have already quietly slipped away, to become politically inactive or to work in single-issue organizations or on their own in the Democratic Party.

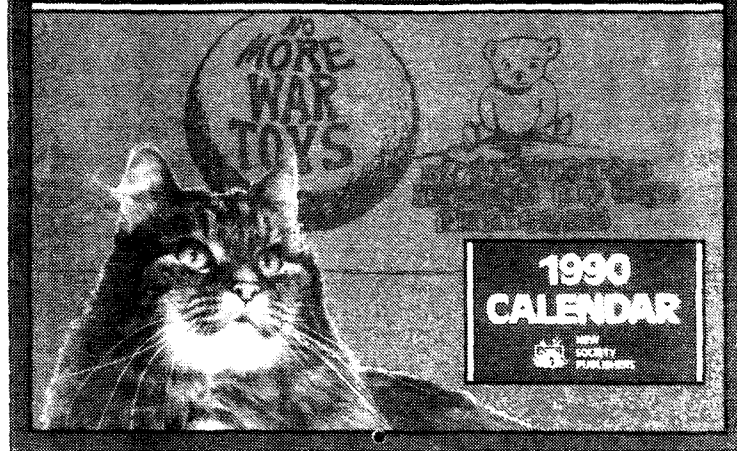
On the local level, the problem is that belonging to DSA has sometimes meant nothing but extra meetings to those commit-

ted to activity around single issues. As Howe told the convention, "Activism is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a socialist movement. We can join the mine strikers, work for Ruth Messinger, join anti-racist protests, work in unions, work in the Democratic Party where it exists or in third parties that don't exist. We can do a hundred and one things that a socialist should be doing, but if that is all," DSA will lose its unique function and "shriveled into a sect—a nice sect, but politically irrelevant."

The challenge that faces DSA is both intellectual and organizational. If it is to transform itself into a vital component of a new American left, it will have to develop a range of programs that embody socialist principles and the vision of a more humane and democratic society. It will also have to begin working closely with its local organizations, providing help in developing legislation on local or state issues, coordinating activities, organizing issue conferences and training people involved in running local election campaigns. One delegate, Oregon state Rep. Bev Stein—whose local chapter is now defunct—talked about organizing a regional conference of elected left legislators to discuss mutual assistance in developing legislation and other ways to increase their numbers and influence. This is one kind of activity in which DSA could be especially helpful, and from which it could begin to learn some practical lessons about the merger of theory and practice.

Since its inception, DSA has concentrated its energies on presidential politics. I have long argued that this is a hopeless waste of time for an organization without a popular constituency; it is an arena in which the organization can have no real influence. On a local level, however, there is much that could be done—some of which is already being done by DSA members without any help from the national office. The possibility of orienting the national office to such work now exists. To do so would help DSA develop a strategic vision that conforms with political reality without having to suppress its socialist principles.

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Novick and the *Freiheit*: end of an era

By Lawrence Bush

UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11, 1988, Paul Novick, at age 97, was the world's oldest active newspaper editor. He sat each day at an antique Yiddish typewriter in the offices of the *Morgn Freiheit*, a 66-year-old left-wing Yiddish newspaper for which he had worked since its inception. Novick had been editor in chief since the death in 1939 of Moissaye Olgin, the founding editor whose image still appeared as a murky photo in the upper-right corner of each edition. Few of Novick's cheerleaders expected him to outlive his life's work; some urged him to retire in time to write at least one volume of his memoirs.

Morgn Freiheit means "morning freedom," but for Novick the job had become an enslavement, a nightmarish reverse image of retirement. The paper was \$50,000 in debt; Novick and his co-workers, Chaim Suller and Israel Freed (both well into their 80s), were struggling to amass big bucks from little people—the readers who had been pitching in more than \$300,000 each year from their savings, pensions and Social Security checks.

They gave religiously, supporting the *Freiheit* as a *mitzvah*, an obligation of progressive Jewish life. But fewer than 2,000 of them were still alive. The four-page English section, meant to encourage readership among "the youth" (that is, the under-80, born-in-America genera-

tion whose Yiddish is rusty or nonexistent) cost \$18,000 annually to produce and had netted fewer than 300 independent subscribers.

The Angel of Death: The paper's rent for Manhattan office space had trebled; postage had steeply increased. The network of radical Jewish clubs and cultural societies—the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women, the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus—that for decades supported the *Freiheit* as their communications hub, had been dwindling like the paper that spawned them. It published daily for half a century and became a 16-page weekly in 1981.

In short, the *malekh a moves*, the Angel of Death, was knocking at the *Freiheit's* door—and even a \$50,000

pot of gold would not have sufficed as a bribe for long. Still, Novick put

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in his days at the office and his evenings on the telephone. He tapped out articles about Gorbachov

Few of Paul Novick's cheerleaders expected him to outlive his life's work.

and *glasnost*, which he rightfully saw as a vindication of his paper's post-1956 stance toward the Soviet Union. ("Since Nikita Khrushchov disclosed Stalin's crimes," he would write in his farewell editorial, "the *Morgn Freiheit* was characterized by *glasnost* for 32 years.... History has justified us!")

He read and clipped the international Jewish press. He sifted through the press releases from the major American Jewish organizations. He dickered with the Orthodox Jewish typesetters who, ironically enough, had taken over the *Freiheit's* production work and now shared its offices.

He sighed over the death notices of old *chaverim*, most of whom he knew personally from his half-century of speechmaking and fundraising on the *Freiheit's* behalf.

He spent occasional afternoons speaking into young historians' tape recorders.

He daubed the doorposts in red ink so that the Angel of Death would pass over. He sneaked beyond the barriers of time and inevitability to get the newspaper into the mailbox and out to my grandmother in Queens.

A loyal subscriber: My grandmother, Bessie, is 96 years old. One year after receiving the final issue of the *Morgn Freiheit*, she insists that it would soon be back in gear. She refuses the subscription that I offer to the *Yiddish Forward*, which she labels "social-fascist," as if she were still a Communist Party member living in the sectarian pre-Popular Front days of the late '20s and early '30s.

"My *Freiheit* will be back," she says, almost boastfully. "I just went to a meeting." Some wealthy businessman, she says, is going to bail out the paper. In fact, Bessie has not attended a meeting, or even a *Freiheit* benefit concert, for at least five years. Only sometimes can she make it off her floor, the ninth floor of a 450-bed nursing home, to go downstairs to the main dining hall for her meals.

I repeat to her the details about the *Freiheit's* emergency meeting that I attended just months before the paper's demise: the disappointing turnout of only 20; the astounding energy and eloquence of those 20, all at least 80 years old; the stubbornness that Novick displayed in his remarks about the relevance of the *Freiheit* to the *Yiddisher* folk. Bessie interrupts to tell me, once again, about her personal acquaintance with the editors. *Chaver* Novick, she said, has aged nicely; he used to be more aloof toward people. Chaim Suller is a *mentsh*; every once in a while he does indeed call Bessie to ask, *Vos mach tsu?* (How are you making out?)

Her coherence, as we speak, is a bit iffy. She inquires after my sister-in-law when she means to be asking about my wife. She is unsure as to

the time of day, was about to undress for a good night's sleep at three in the afternoon when I called. Soon she's fabricating another impossible story about how her long-lost friend from nursing school (that is, from 1911) is now working as a nurse in the home and came to see her.

To what end? There are gems to be found in this overgrown field of hers, true stories about escaping from Siberia before the Russian Revolution, about helping to found the American Communist Party in 1921, about union organizing and unemployed councils in the '30s, about marches for "Negro rights" in the '50s. But I've heard and re-heard it all.

Sometimes I get depressed listening to these vague historical anecdotes that seem almost indistinguishable from her fantasies. My heart sours and I wonder, cynically: what did they really accomplish, these Jewish Communist forebears of mine? A labor movement that's nearly moribund, a Soviet Union that chewed 'em up and spat 'em out, a social-welfare system that's weaker than most others in the industrialized world. How much of their radicalism, their dream of a united human race, their unsinkable optimism—how much of it has been anything but illusion at best, coercive utopianism at worst?

Maybe I should be working on Wall Street...

"Larry, you should do me a favor," Bessie says, interrupting my effort to wind down the conversation. "I need to give to my *Freiheit*. I want you should send them a check for \$25. I'll give it to you when I see you."

She still would read the paper if it were available to her. Wearing her thick glasses and using a magnifying

glass, she would read it, or fall asleep trying. The *Freiheit* is the mooring place where her dreams dock and come ashore. The *Freiheit* is her prayer, expressing a lifetime of yearning and faith. The *Freiheit* is the distillation of all the efforts in which she participated, efforts to build socialist institutions within an idiom of *Yiddishkayt*, Yiddishness, the culture of her heart and her *kishkes*, her innards.

The *Freiheit* is her tonic; more than any medicine, it keeps her heart pumping. The *Freiheit* is her passport; whenever she makes a new friend in the nursing home—a rarity, as the painfully heavy attrition rate among old friends as well as the crankiness of her fellow inmates have made her cautious—their first contact seems to be that the person asks to see her *Freiheit*.

"Oy, a leibn ahf dine kop," life should crown your head, Bessie sighs to me when I tell her I'll add a few bucks to her contribution.

Anger is a fool: I am 37 years old. From 1979 to 1984 I worked as an assistant editor to *Jewish Currents*, a monthly English-language magazine launched by the Morning Freiheit Association in 1946. A recent immigrant from the Woodstock Nation, a young burnout from Weatherman-type politics, I was at least 35 years younger than the most junior of the magazine's editorial board members.

Daily I had to ask myself, *Why am I here? There's no rock'n'roll here. There are no feminists here. There is no future here.* And daily the answer came in small political gleanings from these men who had gone through the fires of left-wing sectarianism and Stalinism, of self-in-

flicted isolation and McCarthy-inflicted persecution, to emerge with ash on their faces but with a survivors' kind of wisdom.

That wisdom taught that "doing politics" means influencing people, not just being "correct." ("What's the good of a good head," asks a Jewish proverb, "if the feet can't carry it?") It taught that the word "internationalism" needs to have its hyphen restored. ("You can't chew with someone else's teeth.") It taught that humility, not arrogance, fuels political change. ("Anger is a fool.") It taught about sectarian mistakes that I would not have time to repeat. ("Enemies cannot do a man the harm that he does himself.")

These were the remnants of a radical Jewish counterculture that had once been a vibrant alternative to the visible poles of synagogue or assimilation that confronted American Jews. At the heart of that counterculture for half a century had been the *Freiheit*, presenting some of the finest and most beloved writers of the Yiddish language (Morris Winchevsky, Moishe Leib Halpern, Moishe Nadir, Avram Reisen, Sholem Asch, Leon Kobrin...) and spawning a fraternal movement that included choral groups, day schools and summer camps, workers' universities, experimental theaters and more.

Isolation and attrition: Time and again the *Freiheit* community had suffered isolation from the Jewish mainstream and attrition from its own ranks thanks to the stupidities and blunders of the Communist Party to which the paper owed its loyalties: in 1929, when anti-Jewish pogroms in Palestine were described as anti-imperialist uprisings for which the Zionist movement

itself was to blame (this position represented an overnight flip-flop for the *Freiheit*, which had initially printed a carefully balanced treatment of the events); in 1939, when the *Freiheit* engaged in an overweening defense of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact; in the early '50s, when the *Freiheit* remained blind to Stalin's campaign of destruction against Soviet Jewish culture.

Yet the core *Freiheit* activists, when finally forced to reckon with realities of Soviet life and Soviet anti-Semitism, had not crumbled into despair or cynicism, had not turned into rabid reactionaries, had not gone out to make a buck and numb themselves with material comfort. Instead they had self-consciously engaged in a kind of secular *teshuvah*, the turning, or repentance, that is a core experience of Jewish spirituality—and had emerged with a hard-tempered sense of Jewish socialism, a welding of the particular and the universal, an acknowledgement of the Talmudic as well as the Marxist roots of their dialectics.

They're all ancient now. Bessie no longer understands the word "dialectics." Yet even as the political vocabulary slips from her mind, she retains command of two basic sounds that summarize the central teaching of the *Freiheit* for years, the central dialectic of Jewish socialism: a Jewish groan of realism and a Jewish sigh of hope. They both sound like "oy."

I recognize that sound—as I recognize *Yiddishkayt* as rock'n'roll, a homeland for a counterculture. I recognize the choruses and clubs as communes. I recognize the emigration to the Golden Land of America as a kind of acid trip ("Picture your-

self on a boat on a river, where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies..."). I recognize the *Freiheit* as *Tikkun*, *Present Tense*, *Genesis 2*, *Lilith*, *New Outlook*, all the progressive Jewish magazines that are crowding the so-called margins of Jewish life. I recognize Sholem Aleichem as John Lennon, artists whose personal reflections mirrored the experiences and inchoate yearnings of hundreds of thousands of people.

Paul Novick would have understood these oddball analogies. During the week following Lennon's murder, Novick wrote a column expressing his amazement at the hundreds of thousands of young people around the world who had poured into the streets to express their grief at the death of their poet. He spoke of his realization that John Lennon and the Beatles had meant far, far more to their fans than Novick and others of his generation had ever realized. He chided himself gently, saying, "Let us not think we know everything and understand everything."

To read such open-hearted words from a man three times my age filled me with awe. Novick was living in many eras at once, intensely aware of the meaning of history but always alert, too, to what was new in the world. I resolved that day to stop thinking and acting condescendingly toward young people who had not lived through the '60s, but to learn about their lives rather than bemoan their supposed loss—in a word, to remain a radical or, at least, avoid being a fuddy-duddy.

Strong currents: The *malekh a moves* was a stiff city wind that was pushing against him as he made his way on West 79th Street to a winter 1981 meeting of the *Jewish Currents* advisory committee.

I came running out of the subway, late for the meeting. I saw and recognized him from a block away—a small figure without a cane, without a walker, starkly vulnerable, staunchly pushing on.

I approached without running to arrive without startling him. He knew me without introduction and took my arm. I told him how much I appreciated the John Lennon column. He reiterated his feelings of surprise at the depth of mourning that he had witnessed.

Our mutual satisfaction was immense. My presence assured that he would get where we were going, despite the bitter wind. And his presence assured that I wasn't late—it couldn't have begun without Paul Novick. ■

Paul Novick died on Aug. 21, 1989, just short of his 98th birthday (September 7). A pamphlet-length history of the Morgn Freiheit by historian Paul Buhle, originally published in its English-language pages, is available from the Dorwar Bookstore, 107½ Hope St., Providence, RI 02906, for \$2.

Lawrence Bush is editor of *Genesis 2*, a quarterly magazine of Jewish renewal, and author of *Bessie* (1983, Putnam's), among other books.

Paul Novick worked long hours (and years, and decades) to keep the *Freiheit* afloat.



Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared
By Mike Rose
Free Press, 255 pp., \$22.95
(Penguin paperback due out in February)

By Constance Coiner and David Bartine

INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL RE-trenchment has become an increasingly popular response to the old question "what's to be done about American education?" From the cave, Allan Bloom ruefully muses: "The refinement of the mind's eye that permits it to see the

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delicate distinctions among men ... and constitutes real taste is impossible without the assistance of literature in the grand style." From the tantalizing elusive space of "the national community," E.D. Hirsch Jr. informs us that "history has decided" the "main elements of our [national] vocabulary," that he and his colleagues have recorded as many of those elements as they can think of, and that their record should now be America's lesson plan.

In Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared*, we hear a new voice in the education controversy. Speaking from the boundary that divides those who have lived within the inscribed culture from those who have been excluded, Rose offers alternatives to the pronouncements of Hirsch's "national community" and the grumblings from the depths of Bloom's cave. *Lives* asks us to reconsider the way we think about intelligence and literacy, the ways we measure them, and the ways we explain them to ourselves.

Rose renders a portrait of education that brings the complexities of cultural and intellectual diversity into the foreground. Currently associate director of UCLA writing programs, Rose has, for 20 years, taught and learned from people with diverse backgrounds and abilities: children and adults deemed slow, remedial or underprepared; working-class children, poorly educated Vietnam veterans, affirmative-action college students, adults in literacy programs. He speaks of himself and his many "underprepared" students when he says, "In trying to present the cognitive and social reality of such a life—the brains as well as the heart of it—I have written a personal book." Indeed, what sets this book apart is Rose's extraordinary ability to capture the texture and feeling of life on the boundary.

Vocational track sidetrack: The child of Italian immigrants, Rose grew up on busy South Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles, about a mile

Crossover success: border wars of the underprepared

from Watts, in a volatile neighborhood populated by working-class whites, Mexican immigrants and blacks. Rose's father, who had "a year or two" of Italian elementary school, suffered from a slowly debilitating arteriosclerosis. Rose's mother, who had to quit school in the seventh grade, supported the family by working the counter at Coffee Dan's. The special place for Rose in this world was on a plastic chaise lounge in his living room, where he watched TV and listened to music he overheard from a nearby record store.

Because the results of his entrance exams got mixed up with those of another student with the same last name, Rose spent the first two years of high school in the "vocational track." Rose writes: "Neither I nor my parents realized what this meant. We had no sense that business math, typing and English-level D were dead ends. The current spate of reports on the schools criticizes parents for not involving themselves in their children's education. But how would someone like Tommy Rose, with his two years of Italian schooling, know what to ask? And what sort of pressure could an exhausted waitress apply?"

At once autobiography, history of education and theory of education, *Lives* belongs to no single genre. Rose describes it as "both vignette and commentary, reflection and analysis. I didn't know how else to get it right," he says simply. In terms of readability, *Lives* gets it right. It is absorbing, a personal odyssey. Along with his articles and books on language and literacy, Rose has published poetry, and his delight and skill in manipulating language are as evident as his desire to connect with his readers on many levels.

Color, texture, humor, haunting detail—all give a suppleness to the prose. We remember the student James, for example, who has completed a motivation seminar giving him a few techniques and great promises, who is desperately "holding a dream together with gum and

string." And we remember Vietnam veterans who came to Rose's classroom directly from hospitals, prisons or drug- and alcohol-rehab centers, some of them continuing treatment as outpatients "for particularly destructive physical injuries or for flitting horrors that could not be stitched or trussed."

Rose contrasts his desire for a democratic literacy honoring diversity to what he calls the "canonical orientation" to educational reform, à la Hirsch and Bloom. Rose notes that the new canonical voice attempts to disavow the once-overt elitism of the old canonical approach by framing its proposals "provocatively...in the language of democracy." There are some familiar claims among Rose's objections to the canonical approach. The canon has marginalized much of American literature, and yet often those who propose to solve the exclusion problem by simply augmenting the canon don't question its very existence or authority.

The book's most penetrating criticism of the old and new canonical views comes when it briefly examines their assumptions about teaching and learning. The canonical orientation, Rose argues, "encourages a narrowing of focus from learning to that which much be learned." He notes that canonists portray the encounter of student and texts as almost a mystical or religious transmission to the faithful, one that strips learning of the complexities of strong human connection, social context and discord. Meaningful learning occurs in "an excitement and curiosity shaped by others and connected to others, a cultural and linguistic heritage received not from some pristine conduit but exchanged through the heat of human relation." Rose recognizes that democratic culture is, by definition, "vibrant and dynamic, discomfiting and unpredictable," and that "a truly democratic vision of knowledge would honor this complexity."

Cognitive miscues: Rose offers some significant practical, pedagog-

ical alternatives to canonical views. Part of Rose's approach to literacy draws on the work of Mina Shaughnessy and William Labov, who focus on the logic of error and the intelligence of the student's mistake, on the potential rather than the deficiency of the "underprepared." But long before Rose encountered these educators, his experience with elementary-school children and Vietnam vets (as well as his own experience as a South Vermont Avenue kid and a vocational-track student) caused him to question traditional approaches to remediation.

It just didn't make sense to Rose that not knowing the fine points of usage, pronunciation and grammar or composing convoluted sentences "indicated arrest at some cognitive-linguistic stage of development, a stage that had to be traversed before you could engage in critical reading and writing." In fact, it seemed to him, students restrict the scope of their language use by concentration on such particulars. Whether it takes the form of Hirsch's list of indispens-

Rose encourages students to examine prevailing cultural assumptions.

able cultural facts or the grammarian's compilation of indispensable units of communication, the building-block mentality of these species of reductionism are, as Rose indicates, debilitating to the "disadvantaged" and the non-"disadvantaged" student alike.

While addressing the very real problems of academic underpreparation, Rose argues that the underprepared bring to the university knowledge, skills and experiences that aren't recognized as such by most professors. Discussing what he as an underprepared student brought to the classroom, Rose examines the origins of his desire to write poetry. He traces it back to his days as a handyman in the apartments near UCLA, and even further back to the popular music of his childhood: "But way before the printed poem was the radio dial, the only lyrical index I had on South Vermont. The lamentations of Hank Williams and Kitty Wells, the phrasing of the blues, the rhymes and rhythms and sent-from-God saxophone breaks of rock'n'roll—this was the score on which T.S. Eliot and Dr. [William Carlos] Williams played."

Lives introduces us to many others who bring "scores" of their

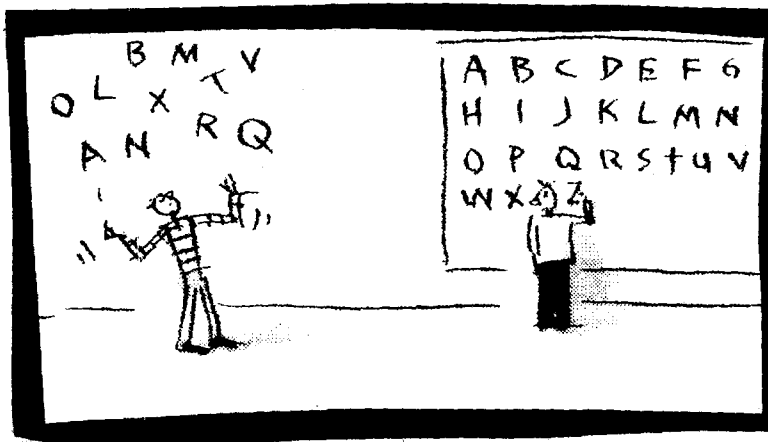
own to the classroom—just the stuff that sends Bloom scuttling to his cave—and calls for an approach to education that "enables us to see simultaneously the constraints poverty places on the play of mind and the actual mind at play within those constraints."

Decayed possibilities: Although it's not a primary focus of the book, the divided self Rose briefly describes should interest readers who also struggle with a double consciousness, who for one reason or another continue to inhabit a psychic boundary long after "leaving" their own versions of South Vermont Avenue. Rose describes the inner labor involved in "holding a hazy and familiar ineptitude at bay with one hand" while continuing to function effectively with the other. "This, I thought, was how South Vermont kept hold of its errant children. You can leave those streets, but the flat time and the diminished sense of what you can be continues to shape your identity. You live with decayed images of the possible."

Rose highlights the need to encourage students to examine the assumptions on which their education and culture are based. He argues that teachers and students must consider the social context in which literacy occurs—the political, economic and cultural forces that encourage or inhibit it—and he rightly notes that "the canonical orientation discourages deep analysis of the way these forces may be affecting performance." We wish Rose had provided concrete proposals for new ways to build such "deep analysis" into our schools. Without such proposals, his analysis stops short of its own trajectory. Like the building on South Grand Avenue in Los Angeles where Rose taught Vietnam vets, *Lives on the Boundary* is one block east of Hope.

Rose's progressive approach to education, one principally devoted to instructors' building on individual backgrounds of students with widely diverse experience, is unrealizable on a broad scale under an economic system based on profit rather than human need. Even so, this remarkable book shows us many changes we need and should be read carefully and heeded by educators and administrators. Most especially *Lives on the Boundary* will resonate for all of us who remember—and remain marked by—childhoods of longing, not limitless possibility. ■

Constance Coiner is assistant professor of English at SUNY-Binghamton. Her book on Tillie Olsen, *Meridel Le Sueur and the intersection of feminism and the Old Left* will be published by Oxford University Press. **David Bartine** is assistant professor of English and rhetoric at SUNY-Binghamton. His is the author of *Early English Reading Theory: Origins of Current Debates* (University of South Carolina Press).



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Saul Alinsky: the radical rebel without a pause

**Let Them Call Me Rebel:
Saul Alinsky—His Life
and Legacy**

By Sanford D. Horwitt
Alfred A. Knopf, 595 pp., \$29.95

By Jonathan Silvers

IN 1972 A GROUP OF ACTIVISTS AT Tulane University, bent on doing their part to end the Vietnam War, invited Saul Alinsky to help plan a demonstration against an upcoming appearance by George Bush, then serving as U.S. representative

ORGANIZING

to the United Nations. Traditional methods of protest—picketing, chanting, sit-ins—were becoming increasingly ineffective, and the students, desperate, hoped Alinsky would offer them a novel, slightly subversive approach to civil disobedience. They weren't disappointed.

Alinsky suggested that rather than simply disrupt the lecture, they cheer wildly whenever Bush defended the war. To this Alinsky added only one condition: "Just make damn sure you're wearing Ku Klux Klan robes." The students obeyed his instructions to the letter, first trailing Bush across the New Orleans campus in Klan regalia and later waving oversized banners reading "The KKK Supports Bush" during his speech. Next day, having successfully sabotaged Bush's visit, the students found themselves hailed as the darlings of the anti-war movement, their stunt replicated at campuses across the country.

Though trivial in comparison to his other achievements, the incident was characteristic of Alinsky's approach to community organizing: innovative, savage and, above all, effective. These qualities made him the premier radical organizer of this century—the man who gave voice to the inhabitants of America's ghettos. And these same qualities make Alinsky the fascinating subject of Sanford D. Horwitt's luminous biography, *Let Them Call Me Rebel*.

Spurred by depression: Born in 1909, Alinsky fought his way out of the slums of Chicago's South Side to a cum laude degree at the University of Chicago, and from there to a safe if unremarkable career as a state criminologist. Prior to the '30s he showed little interest in politics (or in politicians—a prejudice he would happily cultivate throughout his life), preferring the modest comforts of career and family to what he called "radical and quixotic pursuits." That indifference would shatter almost audibly with the onset of

the Depression and the rise of organized labor. According to Horwitt, "Alinsky was swept up by the excitement, the incredible string of CIO victories and the brilliant, powerful leadership of John L. Lewis in 1937 and 1939."

Working closely with Lewis and a battalion of labor officials throughout the '30s, Alinsky picked up the fundamentals of organizing on the streets and the shop floor, occasionally enduring beatings for his enthusiasm. At the same time, he immersed himself in the works of the great social critics and published insightful, provocative dissertations on radical activism.

In 1939, with the CIO firmly established in the American workplace, Alinsky resigned from the movement and returned to Chicago, to Upton

Saul Alinsky's approach to organizing was innovative, savage and effective.

Sinclair's *Jungle* and the slums of his childhood. There, and in hundreds of neglected communities across the country, Alinsky perfected his craft, uniting the disenfranchised and forcing city halls—and Congress—to acknowledge and improve the near-hopeless conditions in which much of the working-class population lived.

His objectives were perhaps best summarized in the opening paragraph of his book *Rules for Radicals*: "The Prince was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power. *Rules for Radicals* is written for the Have-Nots on how to take it away."

Basking in the limelight: Foul-mouthed, relentless, feared and hated in high places, Alinsky was nonetheless respected, even grudgingly admired, by his enemies, among them Richard Nixon, William Buckley and the Catholic Church, one of whose jeremiads declared, "It is impossible to follow both Jesus Christ and Saul Alinsky." Unlike most radicals of the pre-Hoffman/Rubin era, Alinsky clearly enjoyed notoriety: "What bugs the establishment most about me is that I have a hell of a good time doing what I'm doing."

More pragmatist than ideologue, Alinsky devoted much of his later years to ensuring the social programs he created would outlive him. To that end, he founded the Industrial Areas Foundation Training Institute—"a school for professional rad-



More pragmatist than ideologue, Alinsky spent his later years ensuring the social programs he created would outlive him.

icals"—and routinely dispatched scores of minority organizers to cities in need of some shaking up. Writes Horwitt, "Alinsky saw the young generation of activists as his primary audience and spoke to them as a teacher and friend, although not without some scolding." He died in June 1972, nearly 40 years after first devoting himself to the Have-Nots ("they're my kind of people").

Let Them Call Me Rebel is at once

a masterfully rendered biography of an extraordinary man and a meticulously researched account of America's years of struggle. Horwitt is equally adept at exploring Alinsky's complex psychological makeup and ideals as he is at detailing the rise of the CIO or the workings of a federal relief program. The prose is clear, often vivid, the underlying tone reverent. In recent years, Alinsky's achievements have been

eclipsed by the exploits of newer, louder and arguably less effective activists. *Let Them Call Me Rebel* should re-establish Alinsky as the foremost grass-roots organizer of our time and, with luck, inspire another generation to follow his example.

Jonathan Silvers is completing a book on presidential politics. *The Faking of the President* will be published by Viking next spring.

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Health care

Continued from page 13

states or cities own the school buildings and employ the teachers, and parents send their children without cost. Everyone pays for it, whether or not they have children or the children attend public school. The NHS works the same way. Nearly all of the country's 45,000 doctors and 515,000 nurses work for the government, and everyone pays for the plan whether or not they have private insurance.

In general, doctors' pay compares poorly to that in Western Europe and the U.S., but it is still more than double the average British salary. U.S. doctors, by comparison, make about five times the average worker's salary.

The backbone of the system is the family or general practitioners (GPs), who act not only as the primary care providers at the

local level but also as the "gatekeepers" to the rest of the system. A referral from a GP is mandatory in order to see a specialist or seek hospital admission or outpatient treatment. Getting a second opinion is something that is still not done and could seem an affront to the GP. Under the proposed reforms, patient choice of doctors should increase.

The administrative key to this plan will, of course, be money. In a 180-degree shift from previous procedure, funding will follow the patient rather than being hurled toward institutions. Under the old system, hospitals who treated fewer patients were rewarded by being allowed to keep surplus funds. Under the new proposals, hospital funding, long a sore spot in the NHS, would be directly related to the quality and amount of service the hospitals provide.

The 320 largest hospitals in the country—those with at least 250 beds and \$17 million

budgets—would be allowed to become self-governing. The hospitals would sell their services to local health authorities, GPs, private insurers or even neighboring health districts.

The reforms also target family doctors. Under the new proposals, GPs would bear the added financial pressure of having to choose the most cost-effective treatment and would be given an annual drug budget.

And the larger practices—doctors with more than 11,000 patients—would be allowed to "opt out" of the NHS and would be given overall budgets with which to purchase services from hospitals. About 6,000 doctors would qualify initially, and their annual budgets would be about \$1.2 million.

Also, in the past doctors who referred every patient to a specialist received generally the same pay as a doctor who worked a 70-hour week and made house calls. Under the new contract set for April 1990,

doctors' pay will be more closely tied to the number of patients they see. The predictable reaction is painful screams of "fee for service" and "Americanization" as doctors fear they will have less time for patients. Salary is designed to be about \$50,000 annually.

But more disconcerting to many is the large window of opportunity these plans give the private sector. One part of the proposal, inserted at Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's insistence, reads: "Anyone needing treatment can only benefit from such a development. People who chose to buy health care outside the Health Service benefit the community by taking pressure off the service and add to the diversity of provision and choice. The government expects to see further increases in the number of people wishing to make private provision for health care."

And the government has controversially decided to grant tax relief to the elderly, or their families, if they are paying private health-insurance premiums. This is a radical shift in thinking for many British citizens who have grown up with the nanny state and regard the NHS as their bought, fought-and-paid-for birthright.

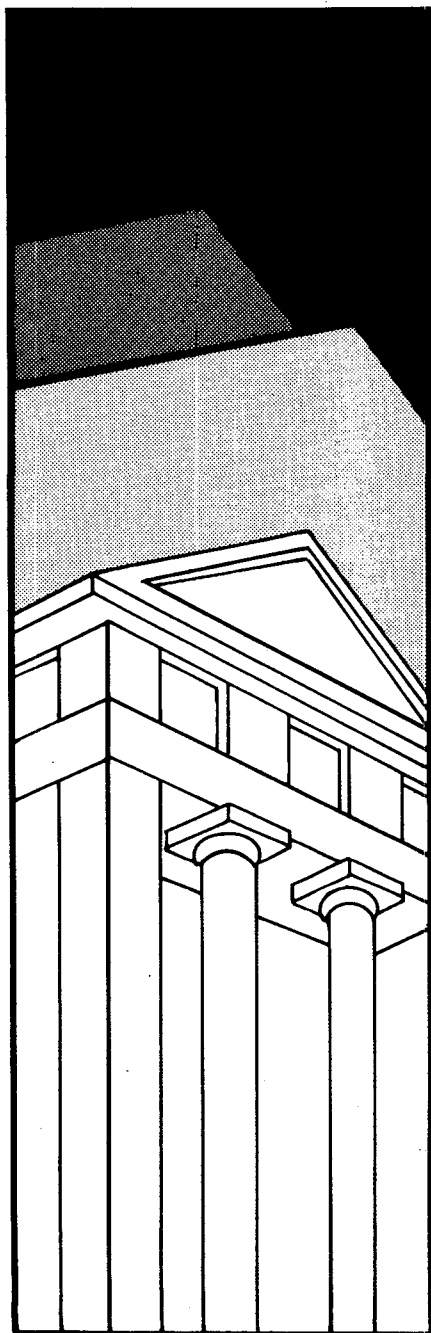
The reform campaign has an unlikely-to-be-met 1992 deadline. And the medical profession, which was not consulted on the changes, is waging a furious multimillion-dollar media counterattack.

But clearly something has to be done. It was announced in October that waiting lists for hospital and outpatient services topped 900,000, an all-time high, and the overall number of patients treated last year dropped. □

Michael Gray is a freelance journalist living in London.

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December 10

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QUICKLY, BEFORE IT GETS ANY WORSE, YOU MUST FIND A QUIET ROOM. LOCK THE DOOR, PULL THE SHADES, UNPLUG THE PHONE, TURN OFF THE LIGHTS, AND GET COMFORTABLE.

TURN YOUR THOUGHTS INWARD. IGNORE ALL OUTSIDE STIMULI.

NOW BEGIN TO VISUALIZE YOUR PAIN. STAY WITH YOUR PAINFUL BRAIN IMAGE FOR SIXTY SECONDS.

THEN, VERY SLOWLY, BEGIN TO IMAGINE YOUR HEADACHE CHANGING INTO SOMETHING MILDLY PLEASANT, IF NOT DOWNRIGHT AMUSING.

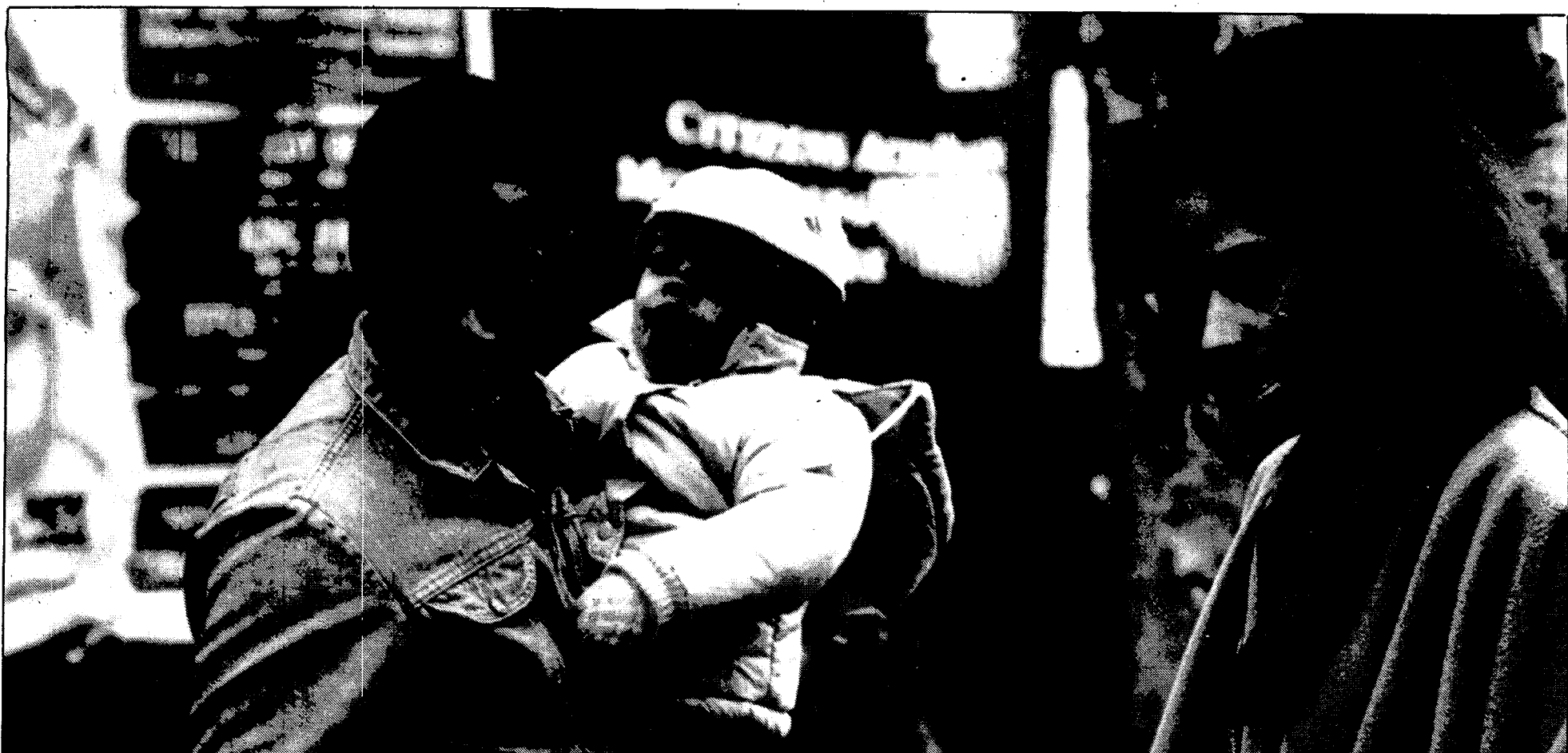
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Hitting the streets when the streets hit back: Charles Lane, Nicole Alysia and Sandye Wilson in *Sidewalk Stories*.

SILENT TREATMENT

***Sidewalk Stories:*
a kid and a tramp
in modern times
take a walk
on the wild side**

Sidewalk Stories

Directed by Charles Lane

By Pat Aufderheide

SIDEWALK STORIES, A BLACK-AND-WHITE, mostly silent heartbreaker from black filmmaker Charles Lane, hits the holiday season with a soft punch in the gut. Unabashedly sentimental, deliberately old-fashioned, unavoidably provocative, it's a film that defies expectation and that also demonstrates the best in independent film.

"I'd be proud to call it subversive filmmaking," Lane said to *In These Times*. "I wanted to make a social statement and also a comedy, a fable with a core of hard reality."

The movie, a blatant homage to Charles Chaplin (and a riff on Chaplin's classic *The Kid*), takes place in Manhattan, where a homeless sidewalk portraitist (played by Lane) struggles to make a living during a cold winter. When street violence leaves a two-year-old girl (Nicole Alysia) abandoned, the artist undertakes her care. Although befriended by a beautiful, wealthy owner of a children's clothing store (Sandye Wilson), he and the child suffer the ordinary cruelties of the homeless. The artist's homey squat is torn down, and they search for shelter in a mission, and finally in cardboard boxes on the street. Once the child is reunited with her mother, the artist and his wealthy friend together confront the bleak reality surrounding their improb-

able friendship.

The film plays counterpoint between its social perceptions and its sentimental warmth. The artist is surrounded by evidence of gentrification and corporate control, and Lane doesn't stint the visual underlining. En route to his hovel, for instance, the artist stops to ponder a sign in a window boasting studios for more than \$1,000 a month. All the evils, though, aren't anonymous; there are con artists, thieves, murderers and crazies on the street (interestingly, these parts are all played by non-black actors, though all the principals are black). And the cops are a constant threat, not because they're predators but because they represent the unblinking authority of the state that makes no provision for its marginals.

But in the midst of structural cruelty and the mutual predations of the poor, Lane focuses on the connections people make in spite of their difficulties. The artist and the store owner, for instance, have a Grand-Canyon-sized gap between them and their growing affection. Some of it is created by gender terror.

When the store owner treats the artist and the child to dinner, she asks them to stay the night, and the artist, suddenly fantasizing the terror of being engulfed by this strong woman, refuses. Most of it, though, is the gap between the worlds of the homeless and the wealthy. You see it when the artist seizes a moment in the store owner's apartment to take a much-needed bath, first carefully sprinkling the bathtub floor with scrubbing powder to remove the inevitable grime.

Kid steals the show: The boldest sentimentality, of course, is between the artist and the child. Nicole Alysia is no Shirley Temple. Alysia is clearly more kid than performer—Temple was always preternaturally a media personality, a pint-sized adult manufacturing kid images. But Alysia still walks off with the scenes where she and the artist play together.

Lane's choice for the silent film in black

and white puts the viewer at one remove from the immediacy of the cruelty his story is grounded in, making it easier for Lane to show us what we typically refuse to look at or think about. Lack of dialogue is also a graphic metaphor, as he says, for the voicelessness of the homeless.

Lane's Chaplin-homage also allows his effort to resonate with the filmic past—especially with the superior physical comedy of Chaplin (Lane's good, but he's not great), and with the poignancy of Chaplin's tramp character. Chaplin's Tramp was, of course, not just a victim of an industrial system that created marginals but also a resister, someone who refused the terms of the working world. Lane's artist is more of a victim—and less of a character—than the Tramp.

Sound of silence: *Sidewalk Stories* expertly employs its references to the past, but it also applies maximal sophistication to a now-archaic form. It is not, for instance, strictly silent. It breaks strategically into sound (and out of fable) at the end—boldly flooding the viewer with the grating, insistent voices of the homeless whose refrains linger after you leave the theater.

More important, the music (by Lane and musician Marc Marder) virtually provides the dialogue. The soundtrack balances between ambient background music, "Mickey Mousing" (an industry term for matching music to the action, e.g., a high violin for the sound of a woman's angry voice), and occasional sound effects. The result, in combination with a careful choreography of action in the filming and editing, is a kind of story poem about the human drama of homelessness.

Sometimes *Sidewalk Stories* can get cloying, and even at a scant 97 minutes it seems a tad long (it's not a film that you watch twice without impatience). But the audacity of the concept carries it over its awkwardness, and however shameless its sentimentality in moments, the

film as a whole is not sentimental. It never allows the viewer to believe that the solution to homelessness is pluck, luck, institutional charity or occasional human kindness. The problem is bigger than the characters; if the central characters refuse to give in to it, many around them have succumbed. And it surrounds us at the end.

For Lane, who was raised in the South Bronx and is the son of a cleaning woman and a postal worker, this is not the first foray into silent film that touches on social issues. He's been working in film for 19 years; his 1980 silent student film, *A Place in Time*, was built on the Kitty Genovese incident, in which a woman was murdered on the street while neighbors silently watched. *Sidewalk Stories* was made for \$200,000, provided by Lane's friend and lawyer, Howard Brickner. Its winter season setting was dictated in part by the low budget, since crew members come cheaper in the winter, when work is short.

His choice of subject matter came from an encounter on the subway one night with a homeless man. Rather than begging spare change, the man asked Lane—a boxing aficionado—about the upshot of a boxing match. "That's when I decided that my film would be about the homeless," Lane said.

Sidewalk Stories' success—it was a hit at Cannes—has given Lane a three-picture contract with Island Pictures. But it doesn't take the edge off Lane's independence of vision. His next project is *Skins*, a sound film about an interracial couple whose major problem is that they never intended to fall in love and are afraid of being victimized by emotion, while the world around them interprets their major problem as one of color and culture.

"I intend to keep on making films that strike my fancy," he says. "Of course, they'll all be from a black perspective, because that's my only perspective on this Earth." ■